The NSS Coordination

About the NSS

The National Statistical System (NSS) in Rwanda is the ensemble of statistical organizations and units within Rwanda that jointly collect, process and disseminate official statistics on behalf of the Government of Rwanda. Specifically, it is composed of five main components: The National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR); various State institutions that provide statistical information. Such statistical data constitute the official statistics; organs which use statistical information; organs that provide statistical information, including public and private institutions, non-governmental organizations, households and the population; and institutions of research and training including institutions of higher learning.

NSS coordination through Legal instruments

The Organic Law Nº 45/2013 of 16/06/2013 – is the law on the organization of statistical activities in Rwanda (replacing the old Organic Law Nº 01/2005 of 14/02/2000), NISR is designated as the coordinator of NSS. The following are articles in the law:

Chapter I: GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 1: Purpose of the Law Establishes a comprehensive legal framework to govern the organization, coordination, and execution of statistical activities in Rwanda. It aims to ensure systematic data collection, analysis, and dissemination to support evidence-based policymaking, national planning, and sustainable development. By establishing clear rules, it seeks to enhance the reliability and utility of statistical outputs for government, private sector, and public use.

Article 2: Definitions
Defines critical terms such as statistical data (numerical outputs from surveys or research), survey (technical data collection from samples), census (comprehensive population data collection), statistics (scientific methods for data processing), indicators (analyzed metrics for phenomena), and visa (NISR's authorization for surveys). These definitions ensure a consistent interpretation, reduce ambiguity, and provide a solid foundation for the uniform application of the law across statistical activities.

Article 3: Scope of Application
Delineates the broad domains covered, including demographic and social statistics (e.g., population dynamics, health, education), cultural data, economic, financial, and commercial statistics (e.g., GDP, trade), agricultural, livestock, and environmental data, and judicial statistics (e.g., crime rates). This wide scope reflects the law's intent to centralize and standardize data collection across sectors critical to Rwanda's development agenda.

Chapter II: STATISTICAL FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

Article 4: Importance of Statistical Data
Underscores the pivotal role of statistical data in driving informed decision-making, policy formulation, and development planning. It emphasizes data as a tool for assessing national progress, identifying challenges, and allocating resources effectively, positioning statistics as a cornerstone of Rwanda's Vision 2020 and subsequent development strategies.

Article 5: Data Quality Standards
Mandates rigorous quality criteria for statistical data, including accuracy (correctness), reliability (consistency), punctuality (timely delivery), frequency (regular updates), promptness (swift

processing), accessibility (user-friendly availability), and transparency (clear methodology). These standards ensure that data is trustworthy and usable for stakeholders, fostering public confidence and international credibility.

Article 6: Data Characteristics
Requires statistical data to be produced with objectivity (free from bias), impartiality (neutral presentation), and professionalism (adherence to scientific standards). This ensures that data reflects reality accurately, maintaining integrity and avoiding manipulation, which is vital for credible governance and policy analysis.

Article 7: Data Publication
Stipulates that statistical data must be published in a clear, consistent, and accessible format for all users, including policymakers, researchers, and the public. It prohibits contradictory or biased outputs, ensuring coherence and reliability. This promotes transparency and enables stakeholders to utilize data effectively for planning and evaluation.

Chapter III: COORDINATION AND STRUCTURE OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM

Article 8: Coordination of the Statistical System
Designates the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR) as the central authority for coordinating the national statistical system. NISR oversees data conception, collection, processing, analysis, storage, publication, and dissemination, ensuring standardization and quality. It is the sole entity authorized to release official statistics or approve external data via a visa, with the option to delegate specific tasks to other system components, enhancing efficiency while maintaining oversight.

Article 9: Components of the Statistical System
Identifies five key components: (1) NISR, the lead coordinator; (2) public administration statistical services producing official data; (3) data users (e.g., policymakers, businesses); (4) data providers, including public/private entities, NGOs, households, and individuals; and (5) research and training institutions, such as universities. This structure fosters collaboration, ensuring a robust ecosystem for data production and utilization.

Article 10: Statistical Activities by Other Institutions
Allows public institutions to conduct statistical activities tailored to their needs (e.g., sectoral data analysis), excluding national or large-scale surveys. These activities must align with NISR's methodologies and standards, and institutions must share all statistical data with NISR. Annual reports require NISR's visa before publication, ensuring consistency and preventing unauthorized or substandard data releases.

Article 11: Approval for Statistical Surveys
Requires NISR's prior approval for surveys covering the nation, a province, or Kigali City, beyond an entity's routine activities. Approval assesses the survey's necessity and methodology, with questionnaires needing NISR's visa. This ensures alignment with national statistical priorities, prevents duplication, and maintains data quality across large-scale efforts.

Chapter IV: NATIONAL STATISTICAL PROGRAM

Article 12: National General Census
Mandates a national general census at least once every decade to collect comprehensive population and socio-economic data. All components of the statistical system must support NISR, as mandated by relevant laws, ensuring adequate resources and coordination for this

critical exercise, which informs long-term national planning.

Article 13: Other Surveys
Requires NISR approval for unplanned national, Kigali City, or provincial surveys not in the national statistical program. Applicants must request authorization two months in advance, justifying necessity and methodology. If NISR does not respond within one month, approval is presumed. Approved surveys' questionnaires must bear NISR's visa, ensuring oversight and standardization.

Chapter V: OBLIGATION TO RESPOND TO QUESTIONS DURING CENSUSES AND STATISTICAL SURVEYS

Article 14: Responding to Survey Questions
Obligates individuals and legal entities to provide accurate and timely responses to questions in NISR-approved censuses and surveys, upon request by authorized officers. This ensures comprehensive data collection, critical for generating reliable national statistics.

Article 15: Prohibition on Professional Secrecy Claims
Prohibits respondents from citing professional secrecy to avoid answering questions in approved surveys. This removes barriers to data collection, ensuring that critical information is not withheld, while respecting confidentiality protections outlined elsewhere.

Article 16: Sharing Basic Data
Requires all institutions in the statistical system to provide NISR with requested basic databases, individual-level data, and regular reports (analytical and periodic). NISR uses this data confidentially, centralizing information to produce cohesive national statistics and support cross-sectoral analysis.

Chapter VI: STATISTICAL CONFIDENTIALITY

Article 17: Prohibited Data Disclosure
Forbids statistical staff from disclosing individual or enterprise data obtained during duties, ensuring strict confidentiality. Data collected via surveys or other methods is protected, with dissemination allowed only in anonymized, aggregated forms to prevent identification, safeguarding privacy and trust.

Article 18: Enterprise Directory Publication
Authorizes NISR to compile and publish annual or as-needed lists of enterprises, including name, address, activity type, employee count, and legal status, without violating confidentiality (per Article 17). This supports economic transparency and business registries while protecting sensitive data.

Article 19: Access to Anonymous Databases
Permits researchers access to anonymized databases, provided they sign non-disclosure agreements and share research results with NISR. This balances data accessibility for academic and policy research with stringent privacy protections, fostering innovation while safeguarding confidentiality.

Article 20: Restricted Data Use
Prohibits using statistical data for non-statistical purposes, such as tax audits, economic enforcement, or judicial investigations. This protects respondents' trust, ensuring data is used solely for statistical analysis and national planning.

Article 21: Confidentiality of Administrative Data
Extends confidentiality protections to data obtained from administrative sources, aligning with statistical confidentiality principles. This ensures consistent privacy standards across all data types, reinforcing trust in the statistical system.

Article 22: Staff Oath of Confidentiality
Requires statistical staff to swear an oath before the Minister in charge of statistics (or their representative) to never disclose confidential individual data learned during duties. This formal commitment strengthens accountability and reinforces confidentiality protocols.

Chapter VII: TRANSITIONAL AND FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 23: Validity of Prior Activities
Validates all statistical activities conducted legally under the repealed Organic Law N° 01/2005 prior to the publication of this law. This ensures continuity and protects the integrity of past data and activities during the transition to the new framework.

Article 24: Law's Drafting and Adoption
Clarifies that the law was drafted in English and considered/adopted in Kinyarwanda, reflecting Rwanda's multilingual legislative process and ensuring accessibility to stakeholders.

Article 25: Repeal of Conflicting Provisions
Nullifies all prior legal provisions conflicting with this law, establishing it as the definitive authority on statistical activities and eliminating inconsistencies.

Article 26: Effective Date
Declares the law effective upon its publication in the Official Gazette on 16/06/2013, marking the immediate commencement of its provisions and Rwanda's updated statistical framework.

NSS Coordination through National Strategies for the Development of Statistics

To serve its purpose effectively, NSS requires strategic and coherent planning, bringing together various stakeholders towards achieving the shared goal of better statistics. Articulating this, a comprehensive strategy document, aimed at development of statistics in the national context, identified also as the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) has proven to be of critical importance in this background.

The first National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS1) in Rwanda, was designed and developed to serve as a framework for the programs, projects and activities of the National Statistical System (NSS) during the period 2009-2014 with the aim of providing relevant, quality, timely and accessible statistics, in a more efficient and coherent manner, needed for evidence-based policy and decision-making.

The second NSDS (NSDS2) covered the period of five years from 2014/2015 to 2018/2019. It strengthened the work done under NSDS1 and helped continuing the development of the National Statistical System (NSS), towards preparing it to respond to the statistical requirements anticipated for a typical middle-income country by 2020. This enabled NSS to further present a comprehensive and accurate picture of the Rwandan socio-economic and environmental fabric, improve the implementation of evidence-based policymaking and contribute to the promotion of dialogue and scientific research. The strategy helped also to ensure that produced statistical data are reliable, coherent, and effective in monitoring variables,

measuring trends and producing indicators.

The third NSDS (NSDS3) is a product of intensive research and consultations. It aims not only at coordinating all statistical activities in Rwanda during the period of 2019/2020-2023/2024, but also at providing general information about the journey of statistical development in Rwanda since 2005, and a better understanding of statistical needs of various development programs at national, regional, continental and global levels. These are mainly the first National Strategy for Transformation (NST 1), Rwanda Vision 2050, the SDGs, EAC Vision 2050 and AU Agenda 2063 by highlighting the need, role and responsibility of each sector. NSDS3 brings on innovative initiative such as the use Big Data analytics and Data Science as mentioned by the Data Revolution Policy whose implementation is also coordinated by NISR through the department of Data Revolution and Big Data. It was created to promote and build capabilities to leveraging Big Data as another source of official statistics in addition to existing sources including surveys and censuses.

The Fourth National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS4), spanning 2024 to 2029, is a strategic framework developed by the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR) to strengthen Rwanda's National Statistical System (NSS).

NSS Coordination through tools (Compendium, guidelines and manuals)

In addition to National Strategies for the Development of Statistics, NISR ensures that NSS members use at most same concepts and definitions for the production of statistics. In that context, useful documents were developed and published for public use. These are for instance: **Guidelines for Quality Assessment of Administrative Data, the Compendium of Statistical Concepts and Definitions, the Rwanda Classification Manual -- Customized International Standard Classification for Occupation (ISCO -0, the Rwanda Classification Manual -- Customized International Standard Classification of all Economic Activities (ISIC, Rev.4),** etc.

NSS Coordination through information sharing and capacity building

For an effective and efficient NSS coordination, NISR ensures that NSS members have the same understanding and updated information of statistical matters by establishing regular communication frameworks and platforms including seminars, workshops and trainings around different topics related to production, dissemination and use of statistics for evidence-based planning, monitoring, evaluation and decision making. These events are organized at the NISR training center, or by outreach workshops.

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