

REPORT



Review of the National Statistical System of **the Maldives**

July 2017



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Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank	GFS	Government Finance Statistics
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations	GFSM	Government Finance Statistics Manual
ASYCUDA	Automated System for Customs Data	GIS	Geographic Information System
BIS	Bank for International Settlements	HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
BoP	Balance of Payments	HS	Harmonized System
CAPI	Computer-assisted personal interviewing	ICLS	International Conference of Labour Statisticians
CIF	Cost, Insurance and Freight	ICS	Integrated Correspondence System
CMI	Construction Material Index	IIP	International Investment Position
COICOP	Classification of Individual Consumption According to Purpose	IMF	International Monetary Fund
CPC	Central Product Classification	IMTS	International Merchandise Trade Statistics
CPI	Consumer Price Index	IOT	Input-Output Tables
CPIS	Coordinated Portfolio Investment Survey	IPSAS	International Public Sector Accounting Standards
CSTI	Civil Service Training Institute of Maldives	IPSASB	International Public Sector Accounting Standards Board
DCS	Department of Census and Statistics of Sri Lanka	ISCO	International Standards Classification of Occupation
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey	ISIC	International Standard Industry Classifications
DNR	Department of National Registration	IT	Information Technology
e-GDDS	Enhanced General Data Dissemination System	JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
ES	Establishment Surveys	KEI	Key Economic Indicator
ESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific	LES	Large Establishment Survey
ETS	External Trade Statistics	LFS	Labour Force Survey
FAD	Fiscal Affairs Division	MCS	Maldives Customs Services
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	MEB	Macro-Economic Budget
FDI	foreign direct investment	MED	Ministry of Economic Development
FOB	Free on Board	MIRA	Maldives Inland Revenue Authority
GB	Gigabyte	MMA	Maldives Monetary Authority
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	MNU	Maldives National University
		MOFT	Ministry of Finance and Treasury

MOHI	Ministry of Housing and Infrastructure	SRM	Statistics Regulation of the Maldives
MOT	Ministry of Tourism	STS	Short-Term Statistics
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding	SUT	Supply-Use Tables
MRDS	Minimum Requirement Data Set	TES	Tourism Expenditure Survey
MVR	Maldivian Rufiyaa	TSA	Tourism Satellite Account
NA	National Accounts	UIV	Unit Value Index
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics of the Maldives	UN	United Nations
NCIT	National Centre for Information and Technology	UNCT	United Nations Country Team
NSCC	National Statistics Coordinating Committee	UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
NSDS	National Strategy for the Development of Statistics	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
NSO	National Statistics Office	UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
NSS	National Statistical System	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
NSSTA	National Statistical Systems Training Academy	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
ODCs	Other Depository Corporations	UN-FPS	United Nations Fundamental Principles for Official Statistics
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
PES	Price and Economic Statistics Section	UNSD	Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations
PPI	Producer Price Index	USD	United States Dollar
QNA	Quarterly National Accounts	VPA	Vulnerability and Poverty Survey
RMF	Recommended Methodological Framework	WHO	World Health Organization
SARS	South African Revenue Service		
SBR	Statistical Business Registers		
SBS	Structural Business Statistics		
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal		
SEEA	System of Environmental-Economic accounts		
SES	Small Establishment Survey		
SIAP	ESCAP Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific		
SNA	System of National Accounts		
SQL	Structured Query Language		

Preface

The Review of the National Statistical System of the Maldives (the Review) was jointly undertaken by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations (UNSD) within the framework of the Asia-Pacific Regional Programme on Economic Statistics.

The Review was initiated in response to a request by the Government of the Maldives to ESCAP, which followed an ESCAP scoping mission in October 2015, triggered by the fact that the Maldives had reached the mid-term point for its current National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) implementation (2010-2019). With the understanding that the Review would feed into the revision of the NSDS, the scoping mission resulted in further detailed agreement on the substantive focus, process and expected results of the Review (outlined in a jointly agreed concept note; see Annex 1).

The Review is based on an extensive assessment performed during two missions, with the objective to describe and analyse the National Statistical System (NSS) of the Maldives. The assessment preparations and conduct was aided by a guidance questionnaire (the Review Tool), tailored to the requested priority focus areas of the review, which included legal provisions, institutional setting, coordination within the NSS, and economic statistics production, dissemination and underlying data sources and registers.

The Review Tool was developed in reference to the United Nations Fundamental Principles for Official Statistics (UN-FPS), international statistical standards and classifications for national accounts and economic statistics, relevant quality assurance frameworks, as well as recent developments such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and related requirements for NSS coordination and demands for economic statistics. As such it represents a fit-for-purpose adjusted version of the standard questionnaire used for global assessments of NSS that have been conducted during the past decade in a number of countries in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (as well as in Mongolia).

The first Review mission took place during 22-26 May 2016 and the second mission during 24-27 April 2017. The assessment team included Ms. Badamtsetseg Batjargal, Director, Administrative Department, General Authority for Intellectual Property and State Registration

(and former Director, Integrated Policy and Foreign Relation Department, National Statistical Office) Mongolia; Mr. Gabriel Gamez, Interregional Adviser on Statistics, UNSD; and Ms. Rikke Munk Hansen and Mr. Christopher Ryan, respectively Chief of the Economic and Environment Statistics Section and Regional Adviser at the Statistics Division of ESCAP.

The missions to Male included sessions with staff members of the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) as well as with experts from relevant ministries and other national and international stakeholders (see Annex 2). Prior to and during the missions, the NBS completed the Review Tool, in coordination with institutions of the NSS where relevant. The present report also utilised materials available at ESCAP, UNSD and other international organisations, as well as supporting materials provided by NBS or available on its website.

Management and staff from NBS were actively involved in substantive discussions during the two assessment missions and provided valuable knowledge and insights about the NSS of the Maldives. The assessment team greatly appreciated the constructive dialogue with all stakeholders.

The team acknowledges the huge amount of work by the staff of NBS and thank Ms. Aishath Shahuda, Chief Statistician of the Maldives and her deputies and staff for their availability and openness in discussions, as well as their provision of essential logistical, coordination and administrative support.

We express our sincere gratitude to H.E. Abdulla Jihad, Vice President of the Maldives and former Minister of Finance and Treasury, Mr. Ahmed Munawar, Minister of Finance and Treasury, Mr. Mohamed Ashmalee, Minister of State for the Ministry of Finance and Treasury, and Mr. Mohammed Zuhair, former Senior Policy Executive of the Ministry of Finance and Treasury, for generously making their time available on several occasions during the missions for briefings and discussions with the assessment team.

We hope that the Review report and its recommendations, addressed to the NBS but also to members of the broader NSS as well as other users of official statistics, will benefit the further development of statistics in the Maldives. In the immediate future, we hope that the assessments and recommendations will be used to revise the NSDS and be taken into account to ensure that arrangements for the Maldives to respond to the demands for data and statistics for monitoring progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are as effective as possible and support the long-term strengthening of official statistics in the Maldives.

Executive Summary

High-quality statistics are necessary for monitoring social, economic and environmental progress of a country. Statistics are central tools for policy-making that is based on evidence, and their public availability and accessibility support transparency and accountability in the process.

A national legal, institutional and organizational framework that secures the application of international standards and best practices for official statistics, such as the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (UN-FPS) is a prerequisite for building legitimacy and credibility in official statistics.

The objective of the Review of the National Statistical System (NSS) of the Maldives was to provide a comprehensive analysis of the institutional, organizational and technical capacity of the country to produce and disseminate official statistics that comply with international standards and recommendations. The review of institutional and organizational aspects covers the Lead Agency for Statistics, placed within the National Bureau of Statistics in the Ministry of Finance and Treasury, as well as other major producers and users of official statistics in the country. The review of technical capacity focuses on data sources and statistical business processes for the production and dissemination of economic statistics and the entities that produce these statistics.

The Lead Agency for Statistics and other producers of official statistics in the Maldives face increasing demand from the Government, the business sector, international organisations and civil society for timely, reliable and internationally comparable statistics for monitoring economic, social and environmental policies. Demand has with the advent of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals increased further. This report takes stock of and assesses the capacity of the NSS of the Maldives to meet those demands and puts forward a list of recommendations for strengthening the production and dissemination of official statistics towards that end. The report also considers opportunities to strengthen the functioning and support to the national statistical system as presented by the ongoing efforts of the Government of the Maldives and the international community to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Key findings and recommendations related to the regulatory framework for official statistics

A comprehensive regulatory framework is essential to ensuring the production and dissemination of high-quality statistics in a country. The national statistics regulation or act should enforce sound statistical principles and create the basis for professional and independent data collection, processing, storage and dissemination of official statistics while securing confidentiality at each of these stages.

Official statistics in the Maldives is regulated by the Statistics Regulation of the Maldives (SRM), which came into force in January 2013. The present review examines the SRM and makes observations on its structure, clarity and appropriateness as it relates to the incorporation of internationally agreed principles and best practices for the production and dissemination of official statistics.

The SRM broadly covers the most important principles for official statistics and makes elaborate reference to the UN-FPS. It however has a confusing structure with some redundant information and inconsistencies. The delineation of the NSS is blurred and the SRM does not outline criteria for the distinction between producers of official statistics and providers of administrative data. It is also not stated clearly in the SRM that the principle of professional independence applies to all producers of official statistics, not only to the Lead Agency. The lack of clarity is problematic for securing professional independence and may be part of the reason why producers of official statistics in the Maldives (other than the Lead Agency for Statistics) seem unaware that the SRM also regulates their statistical activities. To alleviate situations like this, it is considered good practice to include a clear reference to the national statistical regulation in the regulatory frameworks that govern the activities of other producers of official statistics.

Further to professional independence, the production and dissemination of official statistics should be independent of any interference from policy makers and based solely on sound methodology and other professional considerations such as choice of standards and methods, format, content and timing of statistical releases. In that respect, it is unusual that the SRM does not outline the roles, duties and related authority of the position of the Chief Statistician. The Chief Statistician should function as the head of the Lead Agency for Statistics and represent the full national statistical system, hence reporting directly to the President or a line Minister.

On statistical confidentiality, a national regulation or act on statistics shall safeguard the privacy of data providers (persons, households, enterprises and other respondents), the confidentiality of the information they provide and its exclusive use for statistical purposes. This principle is generally well-covered in the SRM. However, related operational provisions, for example on the anonymization of stored data and maintenance of confidentiality of statistical registers are missing. Further, as with professional independence, the SRM does not make it clear that the principle of confidentiality applies across the NSS and not only to the Lead Agency for Statistics.

A national regulation or act on statistics should also provide producers of official statistics with the right to decide the most appropriate data sources based on quality considerations, cost effectiveness and burden on respondents. If principles related to professional independence and confidentiality are mainly about trust, mandate for data collection is mainly about legitimacy. Government organisations should be obliged to give access to administrative data for statistical purposes and respondents to provide the information requested. The mandate for data collection through censuses and statistical surveys is strongly embedded in the SRM. The SRM is however weak in its provisions governing access to administrative data in that it limits to some extent the obligations on the part of administrative data holders to provide administrative data. The SRM also does not specify the details of the mandate of the producer of official statistics such as the right to access data free of charge and the right to access data at the unit level (confidentiality).

While the principles of confidentiality and professional independence are important to the integrity of the NSS, it is not sufficient that they are mentioned in the SRM. The national legislative framework must also provide for supporting mechanisms and tools to translate the principles into effective practices. In this respect, the SRM establishes the National Statistics Coordination Committee (NSCC) but does not put in place sufficient mechanisms or tools for programming official statistical activities of the NSS. A national statistical programme, consulted with an advisory body representing key user groups and endorsed by Government is considered a good practice that enables effective coordination, legitimizes mandates for administrative and survey data collection and ensures the relevance of the services and products of the NSS vis-à-vis key users.

A draft statistics act building on the SRM was submitted to Parliament in March 2013. However, the Parliament's term ended before the adoption of the statistics act and the adoption process is at present on hold. The review examines the draft statistics act and finds that it includes some significant improvements compared with the SRM, for example on the definition of the role,

duties and appointment procedure of the Chief Statistician. However, the confusing structure and most of the shortcomings related to professional independence and confidentiality of the SRM remain.

Based on the examination of the SRM and the draft statistical act, the present review recommends:

- That the draft statistics act (prepared in March 2013) is withdrawn;
- That a new statistical regulatory framework based on the model of a professional independent statistical agency under the authority of the government is prepared. The statistical regulatory framework should comply with the UN-FPS and could be based on the generic law on official statistics developed by United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), adapted to the specific context of the Maldives. If ideally this new statistical regulatory framework should take the form of an act, the option of developing a new statistics regulation for later conversion into a statistics act could also be contemplated;
- That future census operations are regulated by a distinct regulation or act complying with the provisions of the new statistical regulatory framework; and
- That existing legal acts and regulations that are relevant to the production (by the Lead Agency or by other producers) of official statistics or the organization of statistical activities in the Maldives are adapted as necessary for consistency and compliance with the provisions of the new statistical regulatory framework.

Key findings and recommendations related to the structure and functioning of the national statistical system

A National Statistical System (NSS) can be defined as the set of government organisations and units within a country that collects and compiles data, processes them, and disseminates the resulting statistics in compliance with the provisions of a national law on official statistics that incorporates the UN-FPS. Advisory bodies and coordination mechanisms, such as a Statistical Council (representing the users of statistics) and a Statistical Coordination Committee (representing the producers of official statistics) are also part of the NSS. At the centre of the NSS is the Lead Agency for Statistics.

The NSS of the Maldives is horizontally decentralized, with several Government agencies producing official statistics. The decentralized structure of the NSS makes the ability of the Lead

Agency for Statistics to coordinate especially important, and the current limitations in its legal authority to do so especially problematic.

The National Bureau for Statistics (NBS) is placed within the Ministry of Finance and Treasury. However, according to the formal organizational structure of the Ministry, NBS is made up of the National Archives, the National Centre for Information Technology and the Department of National Registration; three institutions that do not have the production and dissemination of official statistics as their main activity. There is no mentioning of a Lead Agency for Statistics as an institutional entity in the organizational structure of the Ministry. The lack of institutional identity and visibility adds to the limitations faced by the Lead Agency in ensuring professional independence and exercising its authority vis-à-vis other members of the NSS, compelling it to coordinate the NSS through good relations and networking. While the Lead Agency is commended for the results they are achieving in this manner, the resulting coordination of the NSS is weak.

One implication of the weak coordination is the absence of comprehensive multi-year or annual programming for official statistics production in the Maldives. While a National Strategy for the Development of Statistics in the Maldives, 2010-2019, is in place, it does not form the basis for statistics development activities in practice. The review team also observed an almost complete absence of engagement with users of statistics in the programming of statistical activities.

Based on these observations the present review recommends that several steps be taken to strengthen the functioning of the NSS of the Maldives:

- Establish the Lead Agency for Statistics as an organizational unit within the Ministry of Finance and Treasury with the Chief Statistician formally assigned as the Head of the unit: The new organizational unit could be named as the »National Statistical Office of the Maldives« or similar. Should the unit be established within NBS, it is recommended that NBS be renamed to better reflect its combined functions, such as the »Statistics and Information Management Division«.
- Establish a Statistical Council at the policy level: The purpose of this new mechanism is to provide policy level oversight and support to the development and implementation of annual and multi-year statistical programmes in the Maldives. The Council should be chaired by a policy-level representative from the Ministry of Finance and Treasury, for example the current head of the NBS. The Lead Agency for Statistics, represented by the Chief Statistician, should be a member of the Council.

- Introduce an Annual Forum for Statistics: To engage the larger user community and build support for and trust in the products and services of the NSS, it is recommended that the Statistical Council organizes an Annual Forum for Statistics for the public.
- Revitalize the NSCC: As an immediate measure, it is recommended that the NSCC revisits the earlier developed list of designated agencies for the statistics outlined in the SRM, and that the Lead Agency uses this exercise to increase awareness among NSCC members on principles governing the production of official statistics as outlined in the SRM and the related roles and responsibilities of the Lead Agency and other producers of official statistics. Subsequent to the establishment of a policy-level Statistical Council, it is recommended that the NSCC (a) uses the Council to push for action by the respective heads of departments of NSS agencies to establish dedicated statistical units; (b) submits the revised list of designated agencies to the Council for approval; (c) develops procedures for NSS programme formulation, resourcing, implementation and reporting for consideration by the Statistical Council; (d) develops the first comprehensive statistical programmes for the Maldives, for approval by the Statistical Council.

In implementing the above recommendations, it is further recommended that:

- Opportunities presented by the 2030 Agenda should be taken advantage of to facilitate the transformation of the the NSS of the Maldives. The recently established Government coordination mechanism for SDG implementation in the Maldives is convened by the Ministry of Environment and Energy, and NBS has been tasked with coordinating related statistics work. The NSCC is the natural mechanism to activate for this purpose, and with the direct link to policy discussions, coordinating SDG-related statistical activities presents a unique opportunity to engage with key government users of statistics, thereby raising the profile of official statistics and the work of the NSS. It is recommended that priority statistics for SDG monitoring in the Maldives be considered as candidates for the planned establishment of subgroups of the NSCC.

Key findings and recommendations on the structure and functioning of the Lead Agency for Statistics

The Lead Agency for Statistics operates with a staffing structure developed and approved by the Civil Service Commission in 2014. The Agency has five technical divisions and one corporate affairs division, in total comprising more than 100 positions. Of these positions, just under 50 are currently filled, suggesting a very significant shortfall compared to what was considered the ideal team size at the time of the development of the structure. During the consultations conducted as part of the present review, there were no indications that the situation was likely to change in any significant way soon; indeed, the reviewers were informed of efforts in the recent past to reduce staff numbers through redundancies.

- In addition to establishing the Lead Agency for Statistics as a unit within the Ministry of Finance and Treasury (as per the above recommendations on the structure and functioning of the NSS) it is recommended that the current structure of the Lead Agency is revised to more realistically reflect current and future staffing numbers, based on expected budget availability.

The Statistical Training and Research Division is the only division in the Lead Agency which is not staffed at all. This reflects long-standing challenges related to meeting training demands and also suggests that training needs of the Lead Agency and the wider NSS will continue to be insufficiently addressed unless dedicated efforts are made. A number of attempts to rectify the situation have been made in the past. For example, the introduction of a CADRE system was proposed and presented by the Lead Agency for Statistics to the Civil Service Commission in 2012. The CADRE system would match each position with a specific, required skill-set to facilitate appropriate recruitment, appropriate compensation as well as professional development through training for staff who would wish to apply for the position in the future. The proposal was however not followed through and eventually not adopted.

Development of human capacity within the Lead Agency and the wider NSS was stressed as a priority by several people interviewed during the review, whether working at the technical, managerial or policy level. The review team fully agrees with the critical importance of attracting qualified staff and supporting their continuous professional development, including through training, in a sustainable manner. Several recommendations are therefore made on this topic:

- As a matter of urgency, investigate options for staffing the Statistical Training & Research Division of the Lead Agency; re-balancing the staff numbers between the Corporate Affairs Division and the technical divisions of the Lead Agency for Statistics may be among the more feasible options given the prevailing budget constraints;
- Revisit the development of the CADRE system and see it through to conclusion to ensure that skill-set requirements for each position are clearly detailed and that staff are suitably compensated;
- Identify the key statistical training requirements of the NSS and develop a statistical training programme to address them. From a sustainability perspective, it is recommended that introductory training is delivered by experienced staff of the Lead Agency. Therefore, 'training of trainers' courses to selected Lead Agency staff should also be included in the training programme. International support for training of trainers courses and for training programme development could be requested;
- Investigate options for addressing the shortfalls in statistical learning at university level, including the possibility of linking the curriculum of the Maldives University with that of Colombo University, enabling interested students to pursue studies in statistics.

Other recommendations to improve the functioning of the Lead Agency are primarily focused on improving dissemination, outreach and engagement with key users and partners at the national and international levels. In this regard, it is recommended that:

- The Lead Agency for Statistics should take the opportunity of its newly acquired role as the coordinator of statistics for SDG implementation in the Maldives to raise the visibility of official statistics in the Maldives, and lobby for additional funding from international organizations. Establishment of task forces within the NSCC that focus on priority SDGs or SDG themes could be leveraged to improve communication with national and international organizations for more effective and coordinated support to statistics development in the Maldives.

Further details on these recommendations are captured in Chapter 3 of the present report.

Key findings and recommendations on data sources, registers, processes and quality

Data for statistics production in the Maldives are collected through statistical censuses and surveys or generated from administrative systems.

A number of challenges surround the use and quality assurance of administrative data. As the Lead Agency for Statistics is not able to exercise its authority to gain access to administrative data at a sufficient level of disaggregation it cannot make use of these for statistical purposes and cannot assure the quality of the resulting statistics. Therefore, the potential for making use of administrative data to validate, adjust or expand the coverage or granularity of official statistics is not realized, and several “administrative statistics,” i.e. tabulations made directly from administrative databases, are published with no validation or other value-added by the Lead Agency. The review recognizes that new regulation is required to fully address these issues and recommends some interim and preparatory actions that can be pursued within the constraints of the SRM (outlined in Chapter 4).

As for statistical surveys, some, but not all are conducted by the Lead Agency for Statistics; several are conducted by other agencies of the NSS. The review team observed that while survey plans are developed in the Maldives, they are for a number of reasons rarely implemented according to plan. Survey plans and schedules are unclear or not communicated widely, change frequently, do not include survey activities of the whole NSS and do not necessarily respond to priority needs for statistics, partly because such priorities are not clearly established.

The Maldives needs to develop a regular survey plan that is budgeted to allow schedules to be adhered to. Only with such planning and budget certainty can full use be made of the surveys and their design and implementation be planned so that surveys complement each other as well as other data sources for cost-effectiveness, maximum topical and geographical coverage, and minimum burden on respondents. A first step however, must be to clarify the statistical priority needs of the country. The following actions are hence recommended:

- *Establish a National Indicator Set:* The National Indicator Set would constitute a development policy relevant reference for data needs assessments and subsequent planning of statistical activities, including survey activities. It is recommended that the development of the National Indicator Set be an undertaking by the national coordination mechanism for SDG implementation, with the Lead Agency for Statistics and other producers of official statistics providing technical

advice. For the Indicator Set to be useful for statistical planning, it is important that it includes indicators needed for monitoring existing national and sectoral development plans, as well as new requirements emanating from the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

- *Conduct a data gaps analysis using the National Indicator Set as a reference:* This exercise would be an expansion of the preliminary data assessment on the Sustainable Development Goals, which was undertaken in 2016, adjusted to meet the requirements of the National Indicator Set. It is recommended that the analysis be an undertaking by the NSCC, led and coordinated by the Lead Agency for Statistics. The gaps should be identified against existing data sources (censuses, surveys and administrative data) so that the analysis provides the basis for adjusting statistical programmes accordingly.
- *Use the findings of the data gaps analysis to develop a national statistical programme, including a survey plan:* To avoid continuous modifications to the schedule and design of surveys, which currently undermine their utility, it is important that the survey plan is realistic within expected budgets and approved at the appropriate level.

In addition, on the statistical business processes surrounding data collections it is recommended that:

- *The Lead Agency for Statistics should improve the production, storage and dissemination of meta-data:* When conducting surveys, an important part of the process is the provision of information that (a) describes how the survey was conducted, and (b) helps understand the data and thereby the effective and correct use of the survey results. It is at present difficult to locate this information for many of the statistical surveys that are conducted in the Maldives, by the Lead Agency or by other producers of official statistics. Meta-data should be generated for all significant statistical surveys and be made publically available through the website of the Lead Agency for Statistics.

Key recommendations for the improvement of economic statistics

National accounts

The national accounts of the Maldives are compiled by the Lead Agency for Statistics and broadly follow the 1993 manual of the System of National Accounts (SNA93). There are however some significant conceptual discrepancies. At the time of the review, annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) estimates were compiled at constant prices (2003), and quarterly GDP at constant prices from the production approach only.

There is no GDP estimated from the income approach and the sequence of accounts by institutional sectors is not available. The national accounts series at constant prices are in general calculated by deflating correspondent series at current prices. The current price series are derived inversely from constant price estimates for most industries.

Several of the legal, institutional and organizational challenges identified in the earlier sections of the present executive summary directly hamper the production and quality of the national accounts. This is reflected in the following key review recommendations:

- The production of national accounts should be further integrated: At present, each basic economic statistics is established from stand-alone data sources by each ministry or agency involved. This hampers the quality of national accounts figures;
- As part of a system-wide survey plan, a comprehensive and integrated system of economic surveys need to be developed;
- Access to unit-level data from administrative records and registers should be granted to the Lead Agency for Statistics;
- The number of qualified staff involved in the compilation of national accounts should be increased and appropriate training and other measures be provided to develop and retain experienced staff.

Government Finance Statistics (GFS)

The Maldives Government Finance Statistics (GFS) is produced by the Fiscal Affairs Division of the Ministry of Finance and Treasury (MoFT). There are no specific provisions on the compilation of the GFS in the Public Finance Act of the Maldives. Despite some recent improvements, there is an urgent need to improve the methodology, coverage, accuracy, consistency and timeliness of the GFS.

- It is recommended to invest substantially in strengthening the capacity of the MoFT for improved GFS, including in human resources and infrastructure devoted to data collection, processing and dissemination of this important statistics;
- It is recommended to update the Public Finance Act of the Maldives with provisions governing the production of the GFS and a direct reference to SRM. In the process, the establishment of a dedicated unit within MoFT that deals exclusively with the GFS should be considered;
- Further, it is recommended to establish a standing working group comprising statisticians from the Fiscal Affairs Division of MoFT, the Maldives Monetary Authority (MMA) and the Lead Agency), i.e. the agencies compiling or producing GFS, balance of payment (BoP) statistics and national account, respectively. The working group should be tasked with addressing issues of coherence and timeliness between these 3 inter-related macro-economic statistics.

External trade statistics

The Statistics Section of the Maldives Customs Service (MCS) is responsible for collection of export and import statistics in accordance with Customs Act and Customs General Regulation of Maldives. The external trade statistics are used by the Lead Agency for Statistics for the compilation of national accounts and by the MMA for the compilation of the Balance of Payments.

Recognizing that external trade statistics in the Maldives has benefitted recently from technical assistance by IMF, the South African Revenue Service, and UNSD, and that a roadmap is under development for migrating to the latest version of the guidelines on International Merchandise Trade Statistics (IMTS 2010), the review recommends issues to be included in the finalization and implementation of the roadmap.

Balance of Payment Statistics

The Maldives's external sector statistics are compiled and disseminated by the Maldives Monetary Authority (MMA) and are broadly compliant with the methodological principles and classification system specified in the 6th edition of the IMF Balance of Payments and International Investment Position Manual (BPM6). With technical assistance provided by the IMF during the past years, the quality and reliability of external statistics in the Maldives have improved significantly.

- It is recommended that important remaining challenges be addressed, including those pertaining to transactions occurring outside the country where no international counterparty data are available on tourism services to validate revenue estimates. Also, the coverage of external sector statistics could be further improved for important economic sectors such as construction, insurance and business services.
- It is also recommended that MMA makes long time series of the external sector statistics according to the BPM6 available on their website. Further, to enhance trust in their products and services MMA should establish a data quality and revision policy and post it on the website; this is a point of relevance to all producers of official statistics in the Maldives.

Monetary and Financial Statistics

Monetary and Financial Statistics (MFS) is compiled by MMA based on information provided by various divisions of the MMA such as the Other Financial Institutions Division, the Insurance Division and the Banking Supervision Division. MFS in the Maldives broadly comply with the methodology, concepts and classifications of the 2000 edition of the IMF Monetary and Financial Statistics Manual (MFSM) and the IMF Monetary and Financial Statistics Compilation guide 2008.

- It is recommended that MMA establishes migration to the 2016 edition of the MFSM as a mid-term objective. This would align the MFS to the methodology, concepts and classifications used by other macro-economic statistics that have been recently adopted or are in the process of being implemented such as the BPM6, the SNA 2008, the GFSM 2014 and the IMTS 2010.

The review team also welcomes the recently adopted MMA Remittance Regulation (2017/R-31) that will allow remittance intermediaries to be included in the MFS. This represents major progress for monetary and financial statistics of a country with many foreign workers like the Maldives.

Price statistics – the Consumer Price Index

The Lead Agency for Statistics is responsible for the compilation of price indices in the Maldives. The Lead Agency recently completed a Household Income and Expenditure Survey (2016) which provides a valuable source of information to re-base the Consumer Price Index (CPI), which was last re-based in 2012. Re-basing is crucial to producing CPI as it ensures that the basket of

goods, which monitors price movement, is reflective of a typical household's expenditure patterns, which do tend to change over time.

- It is recommended that the Lead Agency takes the opportunity of the re-basing to thoroughly review the CPI basket, and simplify it where necessary to enable pricing of items to run more smoothly in the future. Simplification should result in a smaller basket of goods outside of Male where pricing of consistent items is more problematic, causing problems for price collectors;
- Should a comprehensive statistical business register be established for the Maldives, it would also be useful for selecting establishments for price collection for the PPI (currently done using purposive sampling).

Short-term and structural business statistics

Economic statistics in the Maldives are produced by various agencies with each agency having exclusive ownership over the production process of one or more specific statistical products, from data collection to the dissemination of the final deliverables. A more collaborative approach based on sound methodology, clearly defined scope and a re-engineered data collection system would improve consistency and quality of the statistical output, enhance the efficiency of the production processes, reduce the number of questionnaires and free resources for more systematic quality checks and data analysis. Data already available within the public administration should not be recollected; access to administrative data must have priority over statistical surveys and censuses.

- It is recommended to pursue the the conduct of business survey every 5 years to prove high-quality, internationally comparable Structural Business Statistics for the total economy of the Maldives. Such survey should be complemented with more frequent surveys for important sectors and industries that are weakly covered by other data sources such as administrative data. This set-up would also allow the Lead Agency for Statistics to assess the quality of alternative data sources provided by line ministries and agencies, paving the way for a gradual, sector by sector transition towards business statistics based on administrative data;
- It is also recommended to improve the coverage and accuracy of economic statistics through a better estimation of the informal economy, remittances and other non-observed transactions. Quality, reliability and coverage of economic statistics would in general benefit from a more extensive use of statistical information collected through

household surveys such as Labour Force Survey, Living Standards Survey and Household Budget Survey.

It should be noted that the above recommendations would require revisions to the existing legal framework for statistics (the SRM) to be fully implemented.

A statistical business register is essential for proper representation of different economic activities in business surveys. The absence of a statistical business register for the Maldives has been a major stumbling block for past economic surveys. Towards this end it is recommended that:

- The Lead Agency should, in conjunction with planned future economic survey and census activities (proposed for 2018 and 2020 respectively), prioritize the establishment of a statistical business register. It would be crucial to have a solid business register in place to ensure sound coverage and thus credible results. The register should include all businesses in operation in the different islands of the country, with basic information such as their main economic activity, employment of locals and foreigners.
- Considering very low response rates for past economic surveys, a strategy to address this should be developed as part of the preparations for the upcoming data collection exercises.

Tourism statistics

Tourism statistics for the Maldives are produced and disseminated by the Ministry of Tourism and the Lead Agency for Statistics, with input data primarily collected by the Ministry of Tourism.

While much data is collected, the Maldives do not yet compile a Tourism Satellite Account (TSA), a standard statistical framework and the main tool for the economic measurement of tourism. The review team welcomes the initiative taken by the Ministry of Tourism, the Lead Agency and the MMA to progress the establishment of such account.

- Given the importance of tourism to the economy of Maldives the development of a Tourism Satellite Account should be prioritized to enable the harmonization and reconciliation of tourism statistics from an economic (national accounts) perspective. The involved agencies are in this regard encouraged to enter into an agreement that outline respective responsibilities, including which agency should take the lead.

Construction Statistics

Construction statistics in the Maldives are compiled by the Ministry of Housing and Infrastructure (MoHI) using data from several sources. The Ministry does not have a dedicated statistical unit. Several indicators from construction statistics, such as imports of building materials and construction labour, are used by the Lead Agency for the compilation of national accounts and hence for the calculation of GDP estimates. Considering the importance of construction to the economy of the Maldives, the quality of construction statistics is paramount. The present review identifies key technical issues related to the quality of construction statistics and recommends a general approach to addressing them:

- Considering the importance of the construction sector to the GDP of the Maldives, it is recommended that the Lead Agency and the MoHI collaborate closely to estimate the sector as accurately as possible; that the collaboration is formalized through a Memorandum of Understanding; and that the MoU grants access to the required administrative data by the Lead Agency. The combination of resources and expertise of these two entities would, for example, benefit the estimation of unofficial construction activities.

Chapter 1:

Legal setting and Fundamental Principles

1.1 Statistics Regulation/Act of the Maldives

1.1.1 Background

- 1) A comprehensive national legal framework is an essential element to secure from an institutional perspective the production and dissemination of high-quality statistics. Any statistics regulation or act should enforce sound statistical principles and create the basis for professional and independent data collection, processing, storage and dissemination of official statistics while securing at each of these stages the principles of privacy and confidentiality. The national statistics legislation aims also at providing unambiguous criteria for the delineation between producers of official statistics, also known as the National Statistical System (NSS), and other producers of data, such as producers of administrative data. Last but not least, the national statistical legislation provides provisions on the organisation and coordination of the overall NSS and in particular about the prerogatives and functions of the lead statistical agency and its chief executive, also referred to as the Chief Statistician.
- 2) At the international level, there are several sets of principles governing official statistics and among them the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (UN-FPS) as endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in 2014 ([A/RES/68/261](#)). The objective of the UN-FPS is to secure core values of official statistics and therefore ensure that NSS are able to produce appropriate and reliable data that adhere to certain internationally agreed professional and scientific standards, such as professional independence, objectivity, transparency, confidentiality, prevention of misuse and misinterpretation, national coordination and international cooperation. Other international organisations have established principles that can give further guidance to national statistics legislation, such as International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). It is also worth mentioning the European Statistics Code of Practice and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Community Statistical System Code of Practice that can be considered as operational extensions of the UN-FPS and target all relevant areas from the legal and institutional environment, through the statistical production processes to

the quality of final statistical deliveries. Most detailed and fit for purpose guidance is found in the generic law on official statistics developed recently by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).¹

- 3) The present Statistics Regulation of the Maldives (SRM) was endorsed in 2012 by the Regulation Committee of the Parliament and entered into force on 17 January 2013. The previous regulation was from 1999. In March 2013, a draft statistics act (Maldives Statistics Act) that builds upon the SRM was submitted to the parliament. However, the parliament's term ended before the adoption of the statistics act and under the present legislature its adoption procedure was put on hold. In the Maldives, an act is of higher status than a regulation which in the case of the SRM is executed under the General Regulations Act. For this reason, the implementation of a regulation is often not enforced in the same way as a law and in particular in case of conflicting provisions a law takes precedence over a regulation.
- 4) In this Chapter, the structure and scope of the SRM will be first described and then assessed against the principles stated in the UN-FPS and, when relevant, other internationally agreed practices. This chapter will focus in particular on the principle of professional independence, the mandate for data collection and the principle of statistical confidentiality. When relevant, this chapter will also discuss some provisions contained in the draft Maldives Statistics Act and not found in the SRM. Other principles and practices related to the institutional environment will be touched upon but elaborated further in this report, such as coordination of statistical activities and programmes in Chapter 2; adequacy of resources, and equal and simultaneous access (dissemination) in Chapter 3; and commitment to quality, along with other considerations related to statistical processes, in Chapter 4.

1.1.2 Structure and scope of the Statistics Regulation of the Maldives (SRM)

- 5) The SRM consists of 5 parts (or chapters) and one appendix containing the interpretation (or definitions), the oath to be signed by staff of all producers of statistics, a list of statistics to be collected and the UN-FPS. Each chapter is then structured in what could be assimilated to articles and further subdivided in paragraphs (or clauses).

¹ www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/publications/2016/ECECESSTAT20163_web.pdf

- 6) The preliminary chapter (**Part I**) intends to deal with general provisions such as the scope and the objectives of the SRM articulated respectively in its articles 1 and 2. These 2 articles convey important provisions that can be found in most advanced statistical legislations. However, this chapter could have been supplemented by an article on the parties or subjects to the regulation that is not included elsewhere in the SRM. Articles 3 and 4, dealing with the Lead Agency for Statistics and the structure of the Maldives Statistical System are to some extent confusing since no clear criteria are provided for the delineation of the NSS and core provisions on the function and organisation of the Lead Agency for Statistics are spread between these 2 articles. Furthermore, the appointment, term of office and dismissal of the head of the Lead Agency for Statistics (or Chief Statistician) is governed by the Civil Service Regulation, and no further provisions on the role and duties Chief Statistician can be found in this chapter nor elsewhere in the SRM. A sound statistical legislation however should provide the Chief Statistician with the status and authority necessary to carry out the responsibilities in leading and representing the NSS nationally and internationally. These elements largely contribute to the professional independence of the entire NSS, including the Lead Agency, enable compilation of statistics on an impartial basis and build trust in official statistics. In order to enforce the role of the Chief Statistician as warrant of the professional independence of the overall statistical system, it is internationally acknowledged that he/she should report directly to the President or a line ministry (member of the government).
- 7) At this stage, it must be emphasised that the draft Maldives Statistics Act contains well-articulated chapters on the Maldives Bureau of Statistics (Part II), the Statistical System of the Maldives (Part III) and the Chief Statistician (Part VI). The part on the Chief Statistician nonetheless could have been merged with Part II and a clear delineation of the NSS provided in Part III.
- 8) **Part II** of the SRM deals with data collection, compilation, publication and use. The structure and scope of this chapter is almost reproduced identically in Part IV of the draft Maldives Statistics Act. This part is an assortment of provisions on statistical principles (art. 6), mandate for data collection, including statistical surveys and censuses (art. 7-9) as well as more technical elements on collection, compilation and dissemination procedures (art. 9-10). One would observe that different provisions related to population and housing census and *other censuses* are articulated in the SRM

as well as in the draft Statistics Act. In general countries that are conducting censuses based mainly, if not exclusively, on administrative data have incorporated related provisions in their statistics law/act. Others, conducting traditional censuses, like the Maldives, have kept a specific act or regulation (bylaw) governing these operations but making a clear reference therein to the statistics act/law in order not to repeat fundamental provisions regulating statistical activities.

- 9) The SRM does not refer to any tools for the monitoring and coordination of official statistics activities, nor does the draft Maldives Statistics Act. It is considered however to be a good practice to establish national statistical programmes regulated by the statistics legislation with the objective to plan activities of the NSS, efficiently coordinate work between Producers of Official Statistics and obtain a mandate for statistical collection from the government (permission). The programmes legitimate data collection from respondents and formalize administrative data provision. Beside an annual programme of work, national legislations often suggest also the development of a multi-year programme for strategic development. In general, the programmes are developed by the lead statistical agency (NSS) and submitted for consultation to an advisory body (Statistical Council) representing the various user groups within and outside ministries and agencies, and eventually endorsed by the government (see also paragraph hereunder on Part V of the SRM and chapter 2 of this report). Another advantage of listing statistics to be produced and data sources in the statistical programme endorsed by the government instead of in the law to be submitted to the parliament, is to avoid heavy legislative procedure when a statistic must be added or deleted from the list as this could happen with the gradual implementation of an Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) monitoring framework.
- 10) **Part III** of the SRM is dealing with privacy and confidentiality (art. 11) and the obligation for respondents, under some strict guidance, to provide information for data collected under this regulation (art. 12). Similar provisions can be found in the draft Statistics Act of the Maldives under its Part IV. As further discussed in the next sub-chapter, provisions about privacy and confidentiality are central in any statistical legislation and therefore often found in a dedicated chapter. Rights and obligation for respondents are in general incorporated in the chapter about data collection.
- 11) **Part IV** regulates offenses under the SRM and in particular breaches of confidentiality and infringements to the obligation of the respondents to provide truthful information.

This part follows broadly international standards and best practices but it is not clear if the Lead Agency of the Maldives is actually empowered to implement these provisions for data they collect and furthermore if these are also enforced for data collected by other agencies under this regulation. Here again, similar provision in the draft Statistics Act of the Maldives are to be found in Part IV. To summarise, Part II, III and IV of the SRM have been merged in Part IV of the draft Statistics Act which looks a bit like the “potpourri” of some of the most important principles.

- 12) The last chapter of the SRM (**Part V**) is about national and international coordination. Article 14 stresses again the role of the Lead Agency for Statistics as coordinator of the NSS and establishes a Statistics Coordinating Committee whose tasks and responsibilities are detailed in Article 15. This important coordination body under the authority of the Lead Agency for Statistics is going to be further discussed in Chapter 2 of this report but the SRM it is not clear about who is going to represent the other producers of official statistics in this committee. In order to safeguard the professional independence however, it could have been specified that the heads of the specific units producing official statistics within the other agencies are members of the Statistical Coordination Committee. Indeed, this Committee is not deemed to replace the advisory Statistical Council, a body representing users of statistics such as policy makers, media, researchers, business community, civil society and other stakeholders.
- 13) Further to the provisions articulated in the SRM and reflected in the draft Maldives Statistics Act, the latter renames the Lead Agency for Statistics into the Maldives Bureau of Statistics and establishes a Council of the Maldives Bureau of Statistics. However, it is not clear from the draft Maldives Statistics Act if the Council is representing the user communities such as policy makers, media, researchers, business community, civil society and other stakeholders (*advisory* Statistical Council), or, as it was established only in very limited number of countries, a supreme governance body of the National Statistics Office (NSO) often known as the National Statistics Board.
- 14) This ambiguity leaves open 2 totally different organisation models. In the first scenario the legislation defines the National Statistical Office as the leading authority of the NSS and as a professionally independent body organized under the authority of the President, the Prime Minister or any other line ministers. In this context the Statistical Council represents the interests of the users and established as an advisory body to the Chief Statistician - and to some extent to the President or the line Minister –

complemented with a coordination body (e.g. National Statistics Coordination Body) under the authority of the Chief Statistician and representing the producers of official statistics. The second alternative, as mentioned above, is to define the National Statistical Office as an autonomous state body under the direction and supervision of a National Statistics Board which consists of members selected based on relevant professional competence. This model would require however an in-depth adjustment of the draft Maldives Statistics Act. This second scenario, that seems to be the one articulated in the Maldives Statistics Act, would ensure strong professional and managerial independence to the Maldives Bureau of Statistics but the latter would depend nevertheless on public resources and be, therefore, accountable for the use of these resources to the highest national authorities, such as the President. Either the Prime Minister or the President would also appoint the members of State Statistical Board, including the Chief Statistician.

- 15) One could state at this point that the current organisation chart of the Ministry of Finance does not indicate the Lead Agency for Statistics nor the Maldives Bureau of Statistics but a National Bureau of Statistics. The latter is assigned with functions and organisational divisions that are not directly related to official statistics such as national registration, the National Centre for Information and Technology (NCIT) and national archives. This adds some additional ambiguity to the present SRM, but also to the draft Statistics Act, and in particular when it comes to a clear identification of who is to be considered as the Chief Statistician. This is a fundamental issue since the Chief Statistician is the warrant of the implementation of the statistical legislation and related principles such as the professional independence and confidentiality for the overall NSS and therefore cannot be assigned responsibilities that are not strictly related to official statistics.

1.1.3 Professional independence

- 16) According to the UN-FPS, the production and dissemination of official statistics should be independent of any interference from policy makers and decided solely on the basis of sound methodology and other professional considerations such as choice of standards and methods, format, content and timing of statistical releases. Statistical laws should therefore contain sufficient safeguards against such possible interference. Policy makers, as an important users' community, should be invited to decide on what to produce (which statistics and indicators) but never on how to produce. Any policy

clearances of statistical releases speak against professional independence and deeply affect trust in the statistical system and its deliverables. Therefore, most countries have developed and implemented, beside their statistics regulatory framework, a dissemination policy that strictly prevents such policy interferences prior to the dissemination of official statistics.

- 17) The UN-FPS clearly identify professionalism and independence as the core principles for the credibility of a statistical system and the quality of its deliverables.
- 18) The SRM refers to the professional independence of official statistics in articles 2 and 4, as well as in the annexe where the 10 UN-FPS are listed. Article 2 states in its paragraph 6 that the objective of the SRM is to *ensure the adherence to the fundamental principles of official statistics, including scientific principles and professional ethics, on the methods and procedures for the collection, processing, storage and presentation of statistical data*. Article 4, paragraph 1, stressed that the *Lead Agency for Statistics shall be a professionally independent body and shall not be influenced in implementing its activities*. At this stage, it can be observed that the principle of professional independence is clearly stated in the SRM. However, no operational provisions are articulated herein to ensure the correct implementation of this core principle such as the authority of the Chief Statistician to set the time of statistical releases. Furthermore, provisions of the SRM or any future statistical act providing the Chief Statistician an independent role and in particular insisting on transparent rules for his/her appointment and dismissal would go a long way to safeguarding the professional independence of the entire NSS, enabling compilation of statistics on an impartial basis and building trust in official statistics.
- 19) Another shortcoming is that the principle of professional independence, as stated in Article 4, seems to be confined to the Lead Agency (art. 4) but nowhere explicitly mentioned for other producers of official statistics. Moreover, given that the delineation of the Maldives statistical system is relatively blurred, it would be difficult to identify organizational units within other agencies that could be considered as producers of official statistics rather than as producers of administrative data that collect and process information mainly for their own needs and following their own rules and regulations.

- 20) To a large extent, the comments provided above also apply to the draft Maldives Statistics Act.

1.1.4 Confidentiality

- 21) Statistical confidentiality is with the professional independence one of the most important principles of official statistics. A national regulation or act on statistics shall safeguard the privacy of data providers (persons, households, enterprises and other respondents), the confidentiality of the information they provide and its exclusive use for statistical purposes. This excludes the use of such information for any decisions by a government or public sector authority targeted at an individual unit, with the exception of infringements to provisions of the statistical law. In many countries, confidentiality is treated in a specific Chapter (more than one article) in the statistical law.
- 22) As mentioned above, the principle of confidentiality applies at all stages of production processes: collection, processing, storage and dissemination. Formulated differently, in order to safeguard the trust of respondents, data collected for official statistics purposes must not be used in individual form and in a context where decisions about individuals are taken. Therefore, unit-level information held by producers of official statistics, whether collected through reports, surveys, censuses or obtained from administrative sources, shall not be transferred to institutions or organisational units that are not part of the NSS. A possible exception is the use of such data for scientific purposes, but such use should be under very strict and restrictive conditions (anonymised data) regulated by the law and implemented through specific contracts.
- 23) Last but not least, in general, producers of administrative data and registers are not bound to data confidentiality through the statistical law. If confidentiality provisions apply to them, it is through their own laws and rules. Indeed, ministries and agencies at all territorial levels compile such administrative data for own management purposes or in order to implement administrative rules and procedures directly applicable to individuals and/or business entities.
- 24) The principle of confidentiality is broadly covered in the SRM and is mentioned in articles 2, 5 and 11 as well as in the annexe where the 10 UN-FPS are listed. Article 2(\$7) states that the objectives of the SRM is to *ensure that individual data collected by the statistical agencies for statistical compilations are kept strictly confidential and*

used exclusively for statistical purposes, to gain trust of data providers and retain trust in official statistics and further mentioned in Article 5(§1) when referring to the UN-FPS. The SRM also contains a chapter (Part III) dealing mainly with confidentiality and in which Article 11 stipulates under paragraph 3 that *confidentiality must be accorded to any information obtained from permitted data collection operations, which would disclose the identity of the provider* and further under paragraph 8 that *prior to publishing/disclosing statistics collected under this act, the chief executive of the Lead Agency for Statistics, also referred to as the Chief Statistician, shall assure that the data collected is in accordance to the procedures and shall be reviewed prior to publishing for reliability, confidentiality...*

- 25) In general the principle of confidentiality is well covered in the SRM but again some more operational provisions are missing and it is not totally clear if the principle applies across the NSS. The SRM could have stipulated under Part III that the *Chief Statistician* issue standards for ensuring statistical confidentiality based on international practices and guidance to be applied to all producers of official statistics. These standards may include instructions on how to handle and store individual data with identifiers, how to anonymise individual data and how to handle confidential aggregates when releasing statistical tables. Furthermore, if the protection of respondents' privacy requires, the *Chief Statistician* could extend the coverage of statistical confidentiality to certain aggregates composed of more than 3 units in order to avoid indirect identification.
- 26) Last but not least, breaches of confidentiality can occur at all stages of the production process, from the data collection to the dissemination. However, in most cases observed in other countries breaches of confidentiality happen with data storage, in particular when individual records are not stored under the authority and strict supervision of the Chief Statistician. In any case, the anonymization of stored data, whether physically (paper forms) or electronically should be regulated. The issue of confidentiality for statistical registers (e.g. statistical business and population registers) should also be treated specifically in the SRM or in any forthcoming legislation on official statistics.
- 27) With regard to the draft Statistics Act of the Maldives, provisions concerning confidentiality are rather similar but the chapter (Part III) of the SRM that is devoted to this principle was merged with others and therefore getting less visibility. In both legislative frameworks it is stated that all officers of the Lead Agency for

Statistics/Maldives Bureau of Statistics and officers assigned to the statistical units established at the stakeholder agencies shall sign an oath about confidentiality. The draft Statistics Act of the Maldives is even requiring this oath to be signed in front of a judge, commissioner of oaths or the Chief Statistician.

1.1.5 Mandate for data collection and obligation for respondents

- 28) Statistical laws should provide producers of official statistics with the right to decide the most appropriate way to acquire the necessary basic information for the compilation of their statistics from all data sources. Government organisations should be obliged to give access to administrative data for statistical purposes and respondents to provide the information needed, which is collected through reports, surveys and censuses. The choice of the most appropriate data sources shall be made based on quality considerations, cost effectiveness and burden on respondents. If principles related to professional independence and confidentiality are mainly about trust, mandate for data collection is mainly about legitimacy.
- 29) In order to reduce the burden of respondents, it is also considered as a good practice in statistics legislation to foresee a provision that requires from producers of official statistics to explore systematically the possibility to use existing administrative data provided that the conceptual framework is compatible with or can be adjusted to the statistical requirements. In that context it is paramount that holders of administrative data are obliged to provide the data needed for statistical production free of charge at the necessary level of detail. This includes individual data with identifiers. All data, including administrative data, in possession of producers of official statistics is covered by the statistical confidentiality principle.
- 30) The mandate for data collection through census operations and statistical surveys is strongly embedded in the SRM and in particular in all articles of the chapter on data collection, compilation, publication and use (Part II). Part III of the SRM is dealing with the obligation for respondents, under some strict guidance, to provide information for data collected under this regulation (art. 12).
- 31) The SRM mentions in Part II, Article 6 (§2 and §3) that data collection shall be done in accordance with the UN fundamental principles of official statistics and that it shall be done in such a way to minimize the response burden of the citizens. The right for

producers to access administrative data is governed in particular by articles 2, 4 and 6. However Article 10 (§4) in Part II, limits the obligation for holders of administrative data to provide the data by stipulating that data collected for administrative use by other agencies shall be accessed for statistical purposes under the request of the Lead Agency unless otherwise stated in another act. Furthermore, the SRM does not specify that this right applies also for data with identifier (confidentiality) and free of charge.

- 32) The scope and content of provisions dealing with the mandate for data collection and access to administrative data in the draft Statistics Act of the Maldives are broadly similar to those that can be found in the SRM.

1.2 Census-related legislation

- 33) Censuses are complex statistical operations on the basis of exhaustive enumeration that intend to collect data on size and structure of the population, housing, economic units, buildings or farms. Censuses, and in particular the Population and Housing Census, are among the most publicly visible activities of national official statistics, and therefore adherence to the national statistics legislation and the highest standards of quality, integrity, professionalism and confidentiality is of particular importance.
- 34) The NSO shall be responsible in each country for conducting censuses. However, due to the complexity of census operations, other bodies, notably at the local level, that are not part of the NSS may assume an important role in census data collection.
- 35) These bodies and their tasks have to be outlined in the national statistical legislation. Therefore, census operations should be regulated in more detail in a separate legal act that should provide a clear reference to the national statistics act. Some countries however have decided to have the provisions, especially for economic censuses, incorporated in their respective national statistics act and, therefore, do not need a specific legal act for that. These countries having chosen the second option are conducting censuses based mainly, if not exclusively, on administrative data.
- 36) With the exception of some minor provisions on censuses in the SRM and the draft Statistics Act of the Maldives, there is no specific legal act or regulation governing census operations in the Maldives.

1.3 Other legislation related to statistics

- 37) Official statistics produced by other authorities than the Lead Statistics Agency according to their own regulatory frameworks should comply with the SRM and, if needed, to be aligned with the main principles and provisions of any future Statistics Act. In general a good practice would be to mention in legal acts regulating official statistics activities of other producers a clear reference to the Maldives statistical legislation in force.
- 38) From a quick review of available acts and regulation pertaining to other producers of official statistics and, for the purpose of this assessment focusing mainly on economic statistics, the Maldives Monetary Authority (MMA), the Maldives Custom Services and the Ministry of Tourism, it seems that none such legal frameworks are specifically governing the production of official statistics. Some of them, such as the Regulation on Collection of Data for the Compilation of Tourism Statistics is somehow more elaborate but rather technical and focusing on the of data to be collected/submitted. One would mention however that Article 35 of the Maldives Monetary Authority Act on collection of statistics makes a clear reference to guidelines issued by the national bureau of statistics of the Maldives.

1.4 Assessment and recommendations

- 39) The Statistics Regulation of the Maldives (SRM) was introduced in 2013 and describes the objectives of the regulation, the functions of the Lead Agency for Statistics and to some extent of other producers of official statistics. The SRM broadly covers the most important principles for official statistics and makes a clear reference to the UN-FPS.
- 40) However, the SRM has a confusing structure which leads to redundant, and in a few cases contradictory, definitions and provisions. In the SRM the delineation of the NSS is rather blurred and does not provide clear criteria for the distinction between other producers of official statistics and providers of administrative data. This situation could represent a potential threat to the principles of professional independence and confidentiality since other producers of official statistics do not seem to be aware that some of the provisions of the SRM, and in particular the fundamental principles, also regulate their statistical activities.

- 41) Confidentiality, professional independence and impartiality are the key principles for the integrity of the whole statistical system from the point of view of users and respondents. But it is not sufficient that these principles and other important provisions are mentioned in the SRM. Governance and monitoring mechanisms and tools must be established in the legislative framework to translate principles into effective practices for building and maintaining trust in the NSS and eventually in its deliveries.
- 42) In that respect, it is unusual that a national statistical legislation does not mention the position of the Chief Statistician, who should not be only the head of the Lead Agency, but represents the whole system of official statistics and therefore reports directly to the President or any other line Minister. In his/her function as custodian of the statistical legislation as well as coordinator of the system of official statistics, the Chief Statistician should follow-up on proposals for new or amended legislation in all domains in order to avoid conflicting provisions about official statistics in the national legislative framework. In addition, the Chief Statistician is also requested to monitor the compliance of national legislation with international principles and standards in the field of official statistics, including the legislation related to the production of statistics by other national producers and enforce across the statistical system harmonised standards and guidelines. The required professional competence as well as the procedure for appointment and dismissal of the Chief Statistician should be regulated in the national statistics legislation and made transparent. This would further highlight the role of the Chief Statistician as the guardian of the Maldives statistical system.
- 43) Beside the National Statistical Coordinating Committee with members from all agencies producing official statistics, the SRM should also establish a Statistical Council representing the user communities such as policy makers (government and parliament), the media, academia, researchers, the business sector and the civil society. The authority and mandate of such a Council are primarily to advise and assist the Lead Agency and the government to establish and monitor the implementation of the statistical programmes based on clear priorities. The Council may also consider if the resources (financial and human) made available for official statistics are sufficient and assess if other producers of official statistics are conducting their activities in full compliance with the relevant provisions of the UN-FPS and the SRM.

- 44) If the National Statistical Coordination Committee would deal with methodological and technical issues such as the best data sources for the production of official statistics (“how”), the Statistical Council should focus on what should be the deliveries of the statistical system without interfering with issues related to professional independence. A specific agency can be represented in both advisory bodies but not with the same person. In the Coordination Committee it should be the head of structural unit in charge of statistics and in the Council, for example, a senior manager from one of the policy departments.
- 45) The SRM presents in its annexe a list of official statistics to be collected. This list remains rather vague but in general such information at a higher level of detail is provided in the annual statistical programme. The statistical programmes (multi-year or strategic and annual) are essential coordination tools for the NSS and should encompass all official statistical information and indicators to be produced along with the respective organisations in charge of the data collection, processing and dissemination. This allows producers of official statistics to take into account in a more flexible way emerging users’ needs at national and international level and the Statistical Council to review and assess annually the deliveries of the NSS.
- 46) The assessors were informed during their first mission that In March 2013, a draft statistics act (Maldives Statistics Act) that builds up on the SRM was submitted to the parliament. However, the parliament’s term ended before the adoption of the statistics act and under the present legislature its adoption procedure was put on hold. As mentioned earlier, an act has a higher status than a regulation and in case of conflicting provisions (e.g. between the Statistics Act and a regulation from another producers of statistics about confidentiality) the provisions of a law takes precedence over a regulation.
- 47) The draft Statistics Act shows some significant improvements compared to the SRM, such as a chapter (Part VI) on the role, duties and appointment procedure of the Chief Statistician. However, some of the identified shortcomings of the SRM, and in particular the rather confusing structure remain. Most of the chapters of the draft Statistics Act are drafted for a Statistics Bureau that is a professionally independent agency reporting directly to the President, Prime Minister or any other line Minister while Part V seems to introduce the concept of an autonomous state body under the direction and supervision of a National Statistics Council (or Board). As mentioned earlier in this

report, only a few countries have implemented such a concept of autonomous state body, and this is definitely not the model that the team of assessors would recommend to the Maldives.

48) For the reasons mentioned above, the assessment team proposes to withdraw the draft Statistics Act submitted in 2013 and to work on a new statistical regulatory framework based on the model of a professional independent statistical agency under the authority of the government. The proposed statistical regulatory framework should comply with the UN-FPS and could be based on the generic law on official statistics developed by UNECE², and adapted to the specific context of the Maldives. If ideally this new statistical legislation should take the form of an act, the assessor team also contemplated the option of developing a new statistics regulation that eventually, in the longer run could be easily converted into a Statistics Act.

49) The team of assessors also proposes to regulate future census operations in a distinct regulatory framework complying with the provisions of the new national statistical legislation. In parallel, it would be important to identify and adapt accordingly any existing legal act or regulation in the Maldives that governed the production of official statistics by other agencies than the National Bureau of Statistics and other legislative framework that could have an impact on present or future organisation of statistical activities such as the Act on decentralisation of the administrative divisions of the Maldives.

² www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/publications/2016/ECECESSTAT20163_web.pdf

Chapter 2:

The National Statistical System of the Maldives

2.1 Definition and delineation of the National Statistical System of the Maldives

2.1.1. What is a “National Statistical System”?

- 50) A National Statistical System (NSS) can be defined as the set of government organisations and units within a country that collects and compiles data, processes them, and disseminates the resulting statistics in compliance with the provisions of a national law on official statistics and the UN-FPS. Advisory bodies and coordination mechanisms, such as a Statistical Council (representing the users of statistics) and a Statistical Coordination Committee (representing the producers of official statistics) are also part of the NSS.
- 51) The purpose of the NSS is to produce and disseminate authoritative statistics designed to reliably reflect relevant economic, social and environmental phenomena in a given country following internationally agreed nomenclatures, concepts and methodology. Official statistics shall be made available to all users simultaneously.
- 52) In contrast to producers of official statistics, producers of administrative data collect and process information for their own needs and according to their own legislation, mainly for managing the business of the State (such as tax collection, business registration, etc.) and reporting on their operations to higher authorities that monitor and control their activities (e.g. the Government, the President and the Parliament). These activities differ from those of a producer of official statistics in several ways and are governed by other principles, for example relating to confidentiality and quality. Therefore, units that produce administrative data are not part of the NSS and in general not required to comply with the provisions of the national law on official statistics and the UN-FPS.
- 53) It is nevertheless good practice to make use of administrative data the extent possible, beside other data sources (e.g. censuses and surveys), for the production of official statistics. The reason for this is that the use of administrative data significantly reduces the burden on respondents and the cost of data collection, and can improve the

timeliness and exhaustiveness of official statistics. It is important to keep in mind that the transfer of administrative data to a member of the NSS represents a transition in purpose, namely from administrative data management to production of official statistics; the use of those data after the transfer is therefore governed by the national law on official statistics and the UN-FPS.

2.1.2 How does this general definition translate in the case of the Maldives?

- 54) Official statistics is presently governed by the Statistics Regulation of the Maldives (SRM) which is assessed in detail in Chapter 1. As mentioned there, the SRM lists the adherence to the UN-FPS as one of 10 objectives and includes provisions that elaborates the principles. In doing so however, it introduces ambiguity on some key points that are central to the functioning of the NSS and fails to outline sufficient mechanisms for enforcing those principles in practice. This ambiguity is mirrored in the structure and delineation of the NSS of the Maldives:
- 55) The current organizational chart of the Ministry of Finance does not indicate a Lead Agency for Statistics. Rather it indicates the National Bureau of Statistics, which includes several functions that cannot be characterized as official statistics, including the National Centre for Information and Technology (NCIT), the Department of National Registration (DNR) and the National Archives of the Maldives. An office dedicated to produce and disseminate statistics in compliance with the SRM and the UN-FPS and coordinate the NSS of the Maldives does not exist as a formal entity within the Government of the Maldives.
- 56) Also, the NSS of the Maldives lacks a mechanism with functions similar to that of a statistical council in other countries. Such councils comprise main users and other key stakeholders of official statistics and are an essential feature to ensure broad government support to the work of the NSS and the continued relevance of the statistics produced.
- 57) The National Statistics Coordination Committee (NSCC) has been established in the Maldives and is functioning as a forum for the producers of official statistics. The NSCC is convened and serviced by NBS. However, as mentioned in Chapter 1, the delineation of the NSS is somewhat blurred, in particular as it relates to the distinction between

producers of official statistics and producers of administrative data. This blurriness is mirrored in the current membership of the NSCC.

- 58) A proper delineation of the NSS is more than a formality, since producers of official statistics have not only specific rights but also obligations, such as the principle of statistical confidentiality. This principle implies that unit-level data collected by all producers of official statistics, whether they refer to natural or legal persons, are to be strictly confidential and used exclusively for statistical purposes. This principle is fundamental to safeguarding trust in official statistics and related business processes for data collection and release of results. Administrative data do not need to systematically follow this principle since they are collected and processed for other purposes and according to other rules and procedures. This means that producers of official statistics can have access to administrative unit-level information but that unit-level and other confidential data held by producers of official statistics should not be made available to administrative data providers (single flow principle).
- 59) Further analysing the text of the SRM on this matter, the SRM defines “administrative statistics” as data collected under a regulation or Act of Parliament through administrative means. It further defines “designated statistics” as statistics that are identified as essential for social and economic policy planning, monitoring and evaluation and publically announced by the Lead Agency. These definitions to a great extent match what are commonly referred to as administrative data and official statistics, respectively. The SRM adds the term “sectoral statistics” for data collected by a sectoral agency to facilitate policy and planning decisions. This definition introduces ambiguity as it does not differ clearly from “administrative statistics.” Moreover, it creates confusion as to whether “sectoral statistics” is considered one type of “designated statistics,” and whether a public announcement by the Lead Agency is required for the statistics to be considered “official.” Elsewhere, the SRM uses (but does not define) the term “official statistics” as the heading for a list of 36 areas/topics (Annex 3 of the SRM) that should be produced within the NSS. In several instances, the SRM refers to “sectoral” statistics as “official.” The SRM thus recognizes some statistics produced by sectoral agencies as official, whether or not they are publically announced by the Lead Agency, thereby adding ambiguity with regards to the placement of responsibility for quality assurance, oversight, and dissemination.

60) The assessors observed similar confusion also in practice, with the various entities of the NSS (including the Lead Agency) not sharing a common understanding of what comprises “official statistics” and “administrative data,” respectively, and which criteria an institution (or unit within an institution) must meet in order to be considered part of the NSS. Much administrative data are currently aggregated and issued as official statistics (by the Lead Agency as well as by other NSS agencies); while this does not necessarily constitute a problem, no uniform quality assurance policy or practice related to the process of turning those data into statistics are in place.

61) In summary, it is observed that some components of the NSS are well-outlined in the current regulation and are functioning also in practice in the Maldives; it is also observed that some key components are missing, in particular clarity on the boundaries of the NSS and what is considered official statistics, as well as the establishment of an advisory body or similar entity that represents the user communities.

2.1.3 The structure of the NSS of the Maldives

62) The NSS of the Maldives is decentralized, with a variety of government agencies producing official statistics. According to the SRM, the Statistics Division of the NBS, within the Ministry of Finance and Treasury is the Lead Agency for Official Statistics.³ As mentioned, this organizational unit however does not exist in a formal sense, and we therefore refer to the »Lead Agency« in the present report when it is important to refer only to the part of the NBS that is fully and only occupied with official statistics. The Lead Agency is at the centre of the NSS, tasked with quality assurance and coordination among the agencies of the NSS (SRM Part I, Article 3 and Article 4, paragraph 4).

63) On the basis of the list of official statistics included in the SRM (SRM Annex 3), the Lead Agency in 2013 developed an initial matching list of statistical activities and identified the designated agency for each of those, thereby generating a list of ministries, departments or units to comprise the NSS (see Annex 7: Designation of Statistical Activities). In reference to the earlier observation on ambiguity (in regulation and in practice), it is worth mentioning that this list of statistical activities includes a number of activities of administrative nature (such as processing of arrival and departure cards by the Immigration and Emigration Department).

³ The SRM refers to the “Statistics Division under the Ministry of Planning;” reflecting the Government structure at the time of its approval.

- 64) According to the SRM, each agency that is part of the NSS shall establish a statistical unit and assign staff to the unit (Part I, Article 4, paragraph 5). In practice, however, this provision has been only partly implemented. At the time of the present review, only seven of the 22 agencies of the NSS had established an organizational unit or assigned designated staff to their statistical activities. An overview of the members of the NSS and the institutional arrangements for their statistical activities is provided in Annex 5 and Annex 7 of this report.
- 65) While the NSS is highly decentralized horizontally, vertically it has until recently only had one level, with no representation at the local levels of government.⁴ Island, City and Atoll Councils have provided administrative support to statistical collections but not performed any statistical activities.
- 66) In 2015, 15 Assistant Statistical Officers, to be placed in Atoll Council Offices and reporting directly to the Chief Statistician, were proposed and subsequently included in the approved organizational diagramme of NBS as at February 2016. This development was motivated by increased demand for local statistics from Island and Atoll Councils, following the decentralization of the administrative divisions of the Maldives in 2010.⁵ Already in 2010, four Atoll-level staff were recruited to collect data related to the Consumer Price Index (CPI). In 2015, one additional staff was placed in the Laamu Atoll to coordinate data collection and support data processing within a programme to establish data portals at the Island/Atoll level.⁶ Funding has yet to be secured for the remaining atoll-based positions to be filled. The resulting structure of the NSS of the Maldives is illustrated in Figure 1.

⁴ Administratively, the Maldives are made up of 20 Atolls (governed by Atoll Councils), 187 Islands (governed by Island Councils) and three Cities (Male, Fuvahmulah and Addu - governed by City Councils). The Councils are locally elected and refer to the Local Government Authority; staff working in the councils are under the Civil Service Commission.

⁵ Act on decentralization of the administrative divisions of the Maldives (7/15/2010).

⁶ This activity took place within a joint UN programme on Low Emission and Climate Resilient Development (LECRd); <http://www.mv.undp.org/content/maldives/en/home/>

The National Statistical System of the Maldives

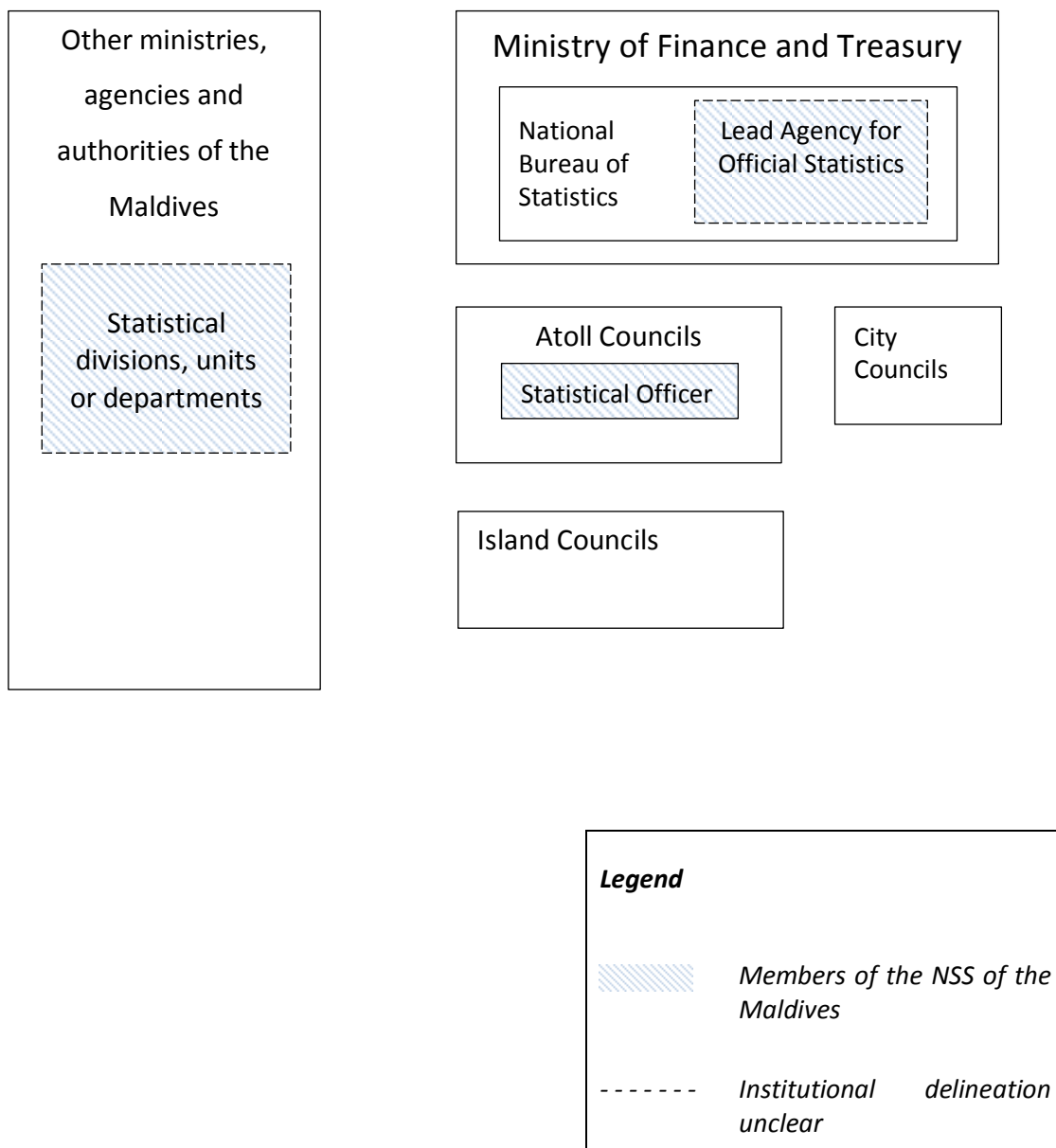


Figure 1: Schematic overview of the Maldivian NSS, as per the SRM (Jan 2013), the organizational charts of the Ministry of Finance and Treasury (Feb 2016 and December 2016), and the NSCC member list (April 2016).

2.2 Coordination authority and mechanisms

- 67) For the sake of efficiency (costs), effectiveness, quality of the deliveries, and reduction of burden on respondents, national systems of official statistics need to be well coordinated. The national statistical office in a country should be given a leading role as coordinator of the system, legally and in practice. Other producers of official statistics shall use the standards approved by the national statistical office regarding classifications, methodology and quality assurance. Ideally, all statistical activity by other producers of official statistics should be incorporated into one comprehensive statistical programme in order to avoid duplication and facilitate complementarity. The national statistical office is in turn expected to support the work of other producers of official statistics by providing technical and methodological assistance.
- 68) In the Maldives, the Lead Agency for Official Statistics is according to the SRM responsible for coordinating the NSS, for setting policies for statistical activities, assure statistical quality, develop and publish statistical regulations (including for surveys), for approving surveys by other NSS entities and providing the necessary collection and compilation support.
- 69) However, as noted in Chapter 1, the SRM does not establish sufficient governing and monitoring mechanisms for carrying out these responsibilities, nor does it assign the required level of authority to the Lead Agency and the Chief Statistician. A particular issue relate to the sharing of administrative data, which in a highly decentralized statistical system is paramount for the national statistical office to advice on classifications and methodology related to compilation and to exercise statistical quality oversight. At present, the Lead Agency receives aggregate levels of administrative data to publish as official statistics, without having access to the underlying micro-data. Without a Statistics Law, the laws governing the functioning of other agencies of the NSS currently overrule the provisions in the SRM that pertain to access by the Lead Agency to administrative data at the unit level.
- 70) Thus, on several key points, the Lead Agency lacks formal legitimacy and authority vis-à-vis the other agencies of the NSS to fully function as the Coordinator of the NSS. NBS has nevertheless succeeded in putting in place a number of mechanisms and tools to exercise its coordination role. In terms of oversight, a request form must be submitted to NBS for approval by any agency that plans a statistical survey (i.e. a data collection

exercise that is carried out for statistical rather than administrative purposes). This procedure is generally enforced, although there is some confusion as to what types of surveys need approval and what implications an approval has for related obligations of the Lead Agency, the requesting agency and the survey respondents. Further, the Lead Agency enforces signing of the statistical Oath (included in SRM, Appendix 2) by its own staff; they are however having difficulties enforcing this practice for other agencies of the NSS.

- 71) In addition to oversight, the Lead Agency has made use of its extensive network and good relations with individuals working in other parts of the Government and the NSS to strengthen coordination. As an example of coordination for improved use of administrative data, the Lead Agency worked successfully with the Maldives Inland Revenue Authority (MIRA) to introduce the ISIC classification in the design of a revised tax form. Similar efforts with the Ministry of Economic Development (MED) for business registration stalled due to difficulties in applying ISIC to the national context. Also, as part of its responsibility to support strengthened quality of statistics produced by the NSS, NBS on a consistent basis invites relevant sector agencies to attend statistics training events. A recent example was a World Bank project that trained around 35 statistics staff of the NSS on sampling and data analysis, processing and presentation. Training efforts are however ad hoc, with no regular training programme in place. Training is assessed in more detail in Chapter 3.

2.2.1 The National Statistics Coordinating Committee (NSCC)

- 72) The main mechanism used for coordination of the NSS is the National Statistics Coordination Committee (NSCC), which was established in 2001. The NSCC comprises all entities within the NSS and is established as a forum for oversight and coordination of statistics production in the Maldives. The NSCC is chaired by the Ministry of Finance and Treasury, represented by the Chief Statistician; the Lead Agency provides secretariat support to the NSCC in terms of calling for meetings, setting the agenda and preparing minutes of meetings.
- 73) Each year, the first meeting of the NSCC is devoted to discussing the planned statistical activities for the year. The frequency of NSCC meetings during the remainder of the year depends on the schedule of statistical activities.

- 74) The terms of reference for the NSCC as provided in the SRM are somewhat contradictory. On the one hand, they establish the NSCC as an oversight body for the work of the Lead Agency and statistical activities by other NSS members; on the other, they attach roles and responsibilities to the NSCC that mainly relate to information sharing and technical coordination.
- 75) In practice, the NSCC functions primarily as a technical information sharing network. Meetings tend to focus on upcoming or ongoing statistical activities (data collections) rather than on more strategic issues, such as policies and procedures for quality assurance, dissemination or other statistics development matters. During the past years, the NSO has observed a decline in attendance both in numbers and level. Also, meetings have become less regular, moving towards ad hoc meetings based on need for discussing major activities of relevance to several NSCC members, such as upcoming household surveys.

2.3 Multi-year and annual statistical planning and programming

- 76) The multi-year (strategic) and annual (operational) programmes are the main tools for a national statistical office to carry out its coordination function. Both programmes, approved by the relevant national authorities are the basis for the planning of statistical activities, ensuring that deliveries from all producers of official statistics are complementary and meet users' requirements in an efficient and effective way, avoiding duplication of data collection and thus keeping the response burden to a reasonable level.
- 77) The National Strategy for the Development of Statistics in the Maldives, 2010-2019⁷ contains a multi-year statistical development programme for the NSS. The NSDS outlines planned developments of the NSS, including institutional strengthening as well as improvements to specific statistics produced by the Lead Agency and agencies of the NSS. The NSDS was developed within a technical assistance project by the Asian Development Bank, and involved consultations with key NSS stakeholders. The resulting Plan was endorsed by the (then) National Planning Council in 2010 and as such constitutes a formal reference and guidance for statistics development activities of the NSS of the Maldives.

⁷ http://planning.gov.mv/diagnostic_assessment_2010/NSDS%20new.pdf

- 78) Following the finalization of the NSDS, monitoring of its implementation has been sporadic; there is no monitoring framework in place and the integration of the NSDS into annual programming and reporting has not materialized. Budgetary requirements are outlined in some detail in the accompanying action plan; in practice however, annual budget planning for statistics is done in isolation by each concerned ministry and submitted separately to the Ministry of Finance and Treasury, seemingly with no reference to the NSDS.
- 79) Probing several members of the NSS during interviews, the awareness of the NSDS and its implications for statistical activities in their respective agencies, proved minimal. Even in NBS, knowledge of the NSDS is limited to key staff, some expressing the view that the NSDS is not perceived to align to current priorities for statistics development in the Maldives.
- 80) Moving to annual programming, the Lead Agency as well as some other agencies of the NSS establish individual annual plans for their statistical activities (such as surveys and censuses). These are shared in the first meeting of the year of the NSCC but are not compiled into an annual programme of the NSS. There is no apparent link between the sharing of annual activities in the NSCC and longer-term NSDS implementation or related budgetary requirements. Key users are not consulted in a systematic or regular manner on the annual statistics programme.

2.4 Assessment and recommendations

2.4.1 Structure and delineation of the NSS of the Maldives

- 81) The delineation of the NSS, including the distinction between producers of administrative data and producers of official statistics, is blurry. In order for the NSS to be the authorized and trusted source of official statistics for the Maldives, it is necessary to enhance the awareness among all NSS agencies of their responsibilities and obligations under the statistics regulation, including adherence to the referenced UN-FPS and the requirement to establish dedicated statistical units within each NSS agency.
- 82) The NSS of the Maldives is horizontally highly decentralized, with numerous Government agencies producing official statistics. Recently, initiative has been taken to introduce a second vertical layer, with statistical officers being placed at the Atoll

Council level. There is a need to clarify the purpose of this expansion to ensure that the results justify the related resource requirements.

2.4.2 Coordination authority and mechanisms

- 83) The decentralized structure of the NSS makes the ability of the Lead Agency to coordinate especially important, and the limitations in its authority to do so especially problematic. Current regulation places many duties and responsibilities on the Lead Agency but does not accord the matching authority to the Agency and its head, the Chief Statistician.
- 84) The organizational structure of the Ministry of Finance and Treasury, which does not include the Lead Agency as an institutional unit of its own within the NBS, adds to the limitations faced by the Lead Agency in ensuring professional independence and exercising its authority vis-à-vis other members of the NSS. For the Chief Statistician in particular, the institutional structure involves reporting through either the civil service or policy head of the NBS (the Permanent Secretary and the State Minister respectively). In a Ministry with other important agendas, this adds to the complications in reaching out to NSS agencies and diminishes the clout with which the Chief Statistician can exercise their role as the Coordinator of the NSS.
- 85) The convoluted organizational structure combined with a weak legislative basis for official statistics compels the Lead Agency to coordinate the NSS through good relations and networking. In effect, these shortcomings have left the NSCC operating as an informal information sharing network rather than a coordination body. The resulting coordination of the NSS is weak, evidenced by an absence of system-wide procedures or policies for quality assurance and dissemination of official statistics, and limited coordination of international statistics reporting. The Lead Agency is however commended for the results they are achieving through informal networking and good relations in terms of survey coordination and adjustments to administrative forms to better serve statistical purposes.
- 86) A particular coordination challenge relates to administrative data: As the Lead Agency is not able to exercise its authority to gain access to administrative data from other NSS agencies at a sufficient level of disaggregation it cannot make use of these for statistical purposes and cannot assure the quality of the resulting statistics. As a result, the potential for making use of administrative data to validate, adjust or expand the

coverage or granularity of other official statistics is not realized, and several “administrative statistics,” i.e. tabulations made directly from administrative databases, are published with no validation or other value-added by the Lead Agency.

- 87) Also related to administrative data, the assessors observed that statistical staff at the NSB increasingly devote their limited time to assisting other ministries in improving their administrative data collections. It should in this regard be highlighted that the collection and management of administrative data is the responsibility of the line ministries that administer related sector policies, and that such operation does not constitute a »statistical activity«. It is however the responsibility of the Lead Agency to reach out to such ministries and provide advice with a view to enhancing the longer term utility of administrative data for statistical purposes, primarily through adjustments to the design of related administrative forms for improved alignment with relevant international statistical standards and classifications.

2.4.3 Multi-year and annual programming

- 88) There is no comprehensive multi-year or annual programme for official statistics production in the Maldives, nor is there any established formal procedure for developing such programmes and securing the required resources.
- 89) While the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics in the Maldives, 2010-2019, is in place, it does not form the basis for statistics development activities.
- 90) The Lead Agency is commended for its transparency vis-à-vis other NSS agencies in terms of sharing its annual statistics programme and providing technical assistance to statistical activities implemented by other NSS agencies. It is observed that the same level of transparency is not extended to the Lead Agency by all NSS agencies, which may be an implication of the lack of enforcement of SRM provisions related to the obligations of each member agency of the NSS.
- 91) An almost complete absence of engagement with users of statistics in programming is observed. The absence of a Statistics Council or similar body representing the user community means that there is at present no mechanism for improving such engagement.

2.4.4 Recommendations

92) Based on the above assessment it is recommended that several steps be taken to strengthen the functioning of the NSS of the Maldives. While noting that many of the recommendations below can be implemented immediately, they should be viewed in conjunction with the recommendation made in Chapter 1 to prepare a new regulatory framework for official statistics in the Maldives and be incorporated, as appropriate, in a revised regulatory framework.

93) *Establish a Statistical Council at the policy level:* The purpose of this new mechanism is to provide policy level oversight and support to the development and implementation of annual and multi-year statistical programmes in the Maldives. Council members should include policy-level stakeholders from relevant parts of the Government. After some experience has been gained, users from beyond the Government, such as media, business associations, academia, etc. should be added to the membership to ensure representation of the wider user community. The Council should be chaired by a policy-level representative from the Ministry of Finance and Treasury, for example the current head of the NBS, the State Minister. The Lead Agency for Statistics, represented by the Chief Statistician, should be a member of the Council.

94) *Introduce an Annual Forum for Statistics:* As an interim measure to involve and engage the larger user community in official statistics, it is recommended that the Statistical Council organizes an Annual Forum for Statistics, where statistical products and their use can be showcased by NSS agencies and where the current and multi-year statistical programmes can be debated by the public. The Forum would also serve a trust-building purpose vis-a-vis the general public in pursuit of greater use of the products and services of the NSS, and facilitation of data collection for statistical purposes from individuals and businesses.

95) Revitalize the NSCC:

- To facilitate the re-direction of the work of the NSCC towards technical substance and coordination, it is recommended that current plans to establish focused subgroups (on topics such as training, environment statistics, development and application of internationally compliant national standard classifications, etc) be followed through.
- To increase awareness among NSS agencies of related roles and responsibilities it is recommended that the NSCC revisits the earlier

developed list of designated agencies for the statistics outlined in the SRM and uses this exercise to clarify the delineation of the NSS of the Maldives, the role of the Lead Agency, and the principles governing the production of official statistics as outlined in the SRM.

- Subsequent to the establishment of a policy-level Statistical Council, it is recommended that the NSCC (a) uses the Council to push for action by the respective heads of departments of NSS agencies to establish dedicated statistical units; (b) submits the revised list of designated agencies to the Council for approval; (c) develops procedures for NSS programme formulation, resourcing, implementation and reporting for consideration by the Statistical Council; (d) develops the first annual and semi-annual comprehensive statistical programmes (with budgets) for the Maldives, for approval by the Statistical Council.

96) To realize the above recommendations, it is recommended that:

- The Lead Agency for Official Statistics is established as an organizational unit within the Ministry of Finance and Treasury, with the Chief Statistician formally assigned as its Head;
- The Lead Agency releases selected staff from other duties to focus on NSS coordination. In this regard, the plans to expand the Lead Agency vertically (at Atoll level) may need to be revisited;
- Opportunities presented by the 2030 Agenda are taken advantage of to the fullest extent to facilitate the transformation of the NSS. The recently established Government coordination mechanism for SDG implementation in the Maldives is convened by the Ministry of Environment and Energy, and NBS has been tasked with coordinating related statistics work. The NSCC is the natural mechanism to activate for this purpose, and with the direct link to policy discussions, coordinating SDG-related statistical activities presents a unique opportunity to engage with key government users of statistics, thereby raising the profile of official statistics and the work of the NSS. It is recommended that priority statistics for SDG monitoring in the Maldives (such as environment and climate change statistics) be considered as candidates for the planned subgroups of the NSCC. It is also recommended that the NSCC subgroups, where relevant simultaneously function as subgroups within the SDG coordination mechanism.

Chapter 3:

Lead Agency for Statistics

3.1 Institutional setting

97) Institutionally, the Lead Agency for Statistics is placed within the National Bureau of Statistics, along with the National Centre for Information and Technology (NCIT), the Department of National Registration (DNR) and the National Archives of Maldives, under the Ministry of Finance and Treasury. Figure 2 illustrates the placement of the National Bureau of Statistics in the Ministry of Finance and Treasury, as per the approved organizational diagramme of the Ministry, and the related reporting line to the Permanent Secretary, who is the most senior civil service representative in the Ministry. At the policy level, the Chief Statistician reports to the Minister of State for Finance and Treasury, who in turn also reports to the Minister of Finance and Treasury.

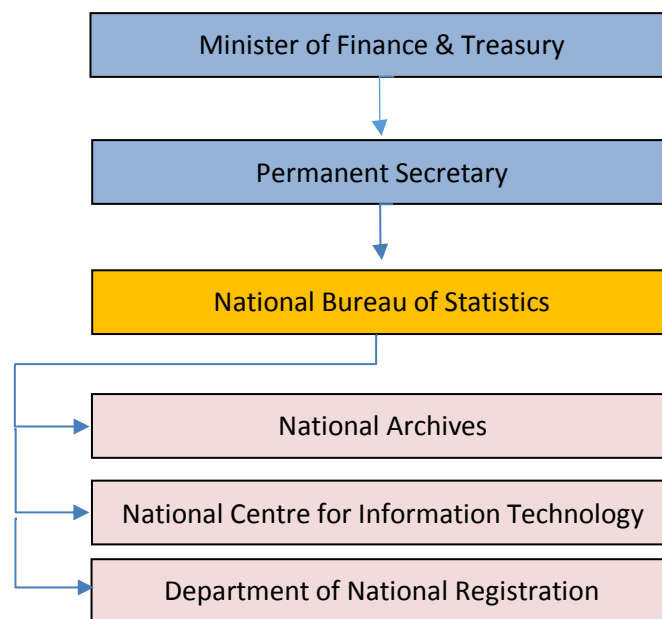


Figure 2: Institutional placement of the National Bureau of Statistics

98) It is clear from Figure 2 that the three institutions; “National Archives”, “National Centre for Information Technology”, and “Department of National Registration” all fall within the structure of the National Bureau of Statistics. What is not clear is how the Lead Agency for Statistics sits within the National Bureau of Statistics, which causes confusion and thus needs to be addressed.

3.2 Functions and structure

3.2.1 Functions

99) The functions of the Lead Agency for Statistics are stipulated in the Statistics Regulation of the Maldives, in Part I, Chapter 3, as follows:

- Be the principal data collecting and dissemination agency responsible for co-ordinating, monitoring and supervising the NSS
- Take responsibility for major statistical operations such as the Population Census, poverty monitoring, national accounts production, approval of survey activities by other agencies, and setting national policies related to statistical activities

100) A further list of tasks is specified in performing these activities which includes the need to address quality, promote standards, provide guidance to data producers/users, co-ordinate activities locally, act as a focal point locally and internationally and take responsibility for providing official statistics, as stipulated in the Appendix of the Statistics Regulation.

3.2.2 Structure

101) The Lead Agency for Statistics developed a new institutional structure in 2014, which was signed off by the Civil Service Commission. The new structure includes a Chief Statistician position that oversees five technical divisions within the NBS:

- Statistical Training & Research
- Statistics Development & Coordination
- Statistical Surveys & Data Processing
- National Accounts & Economic Statistics
- Population & Social Statistics

102) In addition, a Corporate Affairs Division provides support to the Lead Agency for Statistics. This Division is not overseen directly by the Chief Statistician; it reports to the Minister of State for Finance and Treasury and the Permanent Secretary, in liaison with the Civil Service Commission. The Division is headed by a Deputy Director General with overall responsibility for Civil Service Commission matters, such as administration and finance.

103) Each of the five technical divisions has been established to some degree, with the exception of “Statistical Training & Research” which has posts created, but no staff as yet. For the other four, whilst the division head positions are filled, there are still significant issues with filling other senior level positions. This makes it difficult to run operations effectively and retain experienced and qualified staff in the organization. This naturally has significant implications on the Lead Agency for Statistics's ability to implement its mandate effectively, with statistics activities in other parts of the NSS also getting neglected as Lead Agency for Statistics staff are overburdened with their own regular work.

3.2.3 Staffing

104) Within the organizational structure of 2014, more than 100 positions are detailed for the Lead Agency for Statistics, including 18 posts allocated for the Atolls (one posting each). Just under 50 of the 100 positions are currently filled, suggesting a significant shortfall in what is considered the ideal team size. Although there is no strict freeze on advertising and filling positions at the moment, due to budget restrictions it is difficult to gain approval to fill vacant positions. Moreover, once advertised, the Lead Agency for Statistics has on several occasions experienced a lack of qualified applicants, in particular for the more senior senior-level posts. These two challenges suggest that the staff shortfall will be an ongoing problem for some time.

105) A couple of areas that have been depleted the most within the Lead Agency for Statistics are the IT area which has seen staff with these skills poached from other departments who can pay more, and national accounts that loses staff to the Maldives Monetary Authority (MMA) for the same reason as well as for other reasons such as lack of training and development opportunities.

106) Keeping staff has also been difficult due to other reasons such as pregnancies and childcare. Without proper institutions in place to provide related services, many staff are unable to keep full time employment. There are provisions in place to work flexible hours until a child is 3 years old, but this is not considered sufficient and some staff need to resign as a consequence. Loss of experienced staff for this type of reasons is a major issue for the Lead Agency. Around 10 staff took a redundancy in the context of efforts by the Government to reduce civil servants some years back.

3.2.4 Budget

107) The budget for the Lead Agency for Statistics in 2015 was Maldivian Rufiyaa (MVR) 13,949,069, which is the equivalent to around United States Dollar (USD) 905K. Approximately half this budget (MVR 6,462,122) is allocated for staff wages and salaries, with other major expenses allocated for key survey work being undertaken by the office which in recent times has involved the conduct of a Population Census in 2014 and a Household Income and Expenditure Survey in 2016.

108) As can be seen in the table below the allocation to Wage and Salaries has increased slightly over the past 3 years from MVR 5,665,243 in 2014 to MVR 6,949,991 in 2016. Contributing to the increase has been an increase to the allowance component as all staff of NBS under the Ministry of Finance had been given the non-practicing allowance from 2012. The increase in the Salaries component also reflects job promotions to existing staff. When discussed during consultations with staff of the Lead Agency for Statistics, they expressed that their salaries are not competitive. As an example, they reported that staff of the MMA receive around MVR 10,000 more per month for undertaking similar responsibilities.

EXPENSE ITEM	2014	2015	2016
<i>Wages and Salaries</i>	5,665,243	6,462,122	6,949,991
<i>Transport services payments</i>	651,888	730,762	1,305,343
<i>Stationery and materials</i>	725,809	361,965	866,498
<i>Office operations</i>	25,227,112	4,897,199	7,521,664
<i>Training Expenses</i>	2,368,371	84,144	6,530
<i>Repair and Maintenance</i>		66,886	44,642
<i>Publications</i>			
<i>Capital Expenditure</i>	561,066	1,345,990	1,827,632
Total Budget	35,199,487	13,949,069	18,522,299

<i>Census operation (total cost over a 3-year period)</i>	29,246,400		
<i>Household Income & Expenditure Survey operation (total cost over a 3-year period)</i>			8,785,205

3.2.5 Information Technology (IT)

- 109) The IT set-up within the Lead Agency for Statistics appears to be functioning to a suitable level, albeit with some room for improvement. The domain controller has 2 separate servers, one which handles general administrative information, and the other which focuses on statistical information. Access to information on both servers is controlled and can be adjusted to the need of each user/staff member. This is particularly the case for the unit record data from survey activities, where access is strictly needs-based.
- 110) A wide range of different softwares are utilized by the Lead Agency for Statistics for survey activities, including Corel Draw for Questionnaire Design, eFLOW for scanning (only census), CSPro for editing and cleaning of data, Stata for data cleaning/editing and analysis, etc. Whilst CSPro is the preferred tool for data entry and editing for the current Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES), the Lead Agency for Statistics still doesn't have the required capacity to use this tool (ie, needs much more training) and has used Microsoft Access instead.
- 111) IT support for the 45 member team of the Lead Agency for Statistics is provided by 2 persons, which is manageable when no major survey activities are taking place and neither of the IT support persons are on leave. When a major survey occurs then the 2 person team is very stretched to provide ongoing support as required, but they reported they manage to complete tasks and meet deadlines even during these times.
- 112) The computing equipment is currently of a suitable level and updated when the opportunity arises, largely through survey activities such as census. The Lead Agency is in the process of updating scanners, printers and servers. What is still required is an updated firewall (around 15 years old) and a new domain controller (around 13 years old). Due to budget shortfalls this may not happen soon.

3.2.6 Training

- 113) As mentioned in chapter 3.2.2 above, the Lead Agency for Statistics has five divisions, all of which have some capacity, except the “Statistical Training & Research” division which has no staff as yet. Meanwhile, the training needs of staff of the Lead Agency for Statistics and the wider NSS are insufficiently addressed. In order to address the training needs of the Lead Agency for Statistics, and the NSS as a whole, the first step

needs to be to fill the positions of the “Statistical Training & Research” division, and develop a training program to fill current skills gaps of the NSS. Some trainings have been identified already during deliberations with the review team, but this needs to be more comprehensively developed by the “Statistical Training & Research” division, once it is established.

Efforts to introduce the CADRE system

114) To assist with identifying the training needs of the Lead Agency for Statistics, back in 2012 the office looked at adopting the CADRE system. In such a system, a required skills set would be assigned to each position within the office, thereby forming the basis for establishing appropriate pay grade scales and training strategies for staff development. The CADRE system was presented to the Civil Service Commission, who sought additional justification for the proposal. This exercise needs to be revisited and followed through by the Statistical Training & Research Division (once established), in order to establish a clear training strategy for staff of the Lead Agency for Statistics and the wider NSS.

Recruiting and developing qualified staff

115) Another bottleneck for the Lead Agency for Statistics is the lack of qualified applicants. There is currently no statistics level degree offered in the Maldives, neither in universities nor in training institutions. To address this, the Lead Agency for Statistics explored options with the Maldives National University (MNU) for providing graduate training in local universities and developing data analysis and research capacity. An Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is being worked on to establish such a mechanism with the Colombo University, MNU, the Lead Agency for Statistics and possibly the the Department of Census and Statistics of Sri Lanka (DCS). This initiative is now being pursued through United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) with which the the Lead Agency for Statistics has annual activities on statistics development, especially related to population statistics. The country director of UNFPA is placed in Colombo which facilitates the dialogue.

116) The Lead Agency for Statistics is also exploring options with the National Statistical Systems Training Academy (NSSTA) in India and the DCS of Sri Lanka to develop MOUs that would facilitate the delivery of regular statistics training in the Maldives by trainers from these institutions, and the attendance by participants from the Maldives to

regular training provided by NSSTA and DCS. This work needs to be pursued with funding support. Dialogue has also been initiated with the Civil Service Training Institute of Maldives (CSTI) on starting regular short-term trainings in official statistics that cater to the training needs of the NSS.

117) The Lead Agency for Statistics utilizes the training opportunities presented by the ESCAP Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP) when possible. However, the participation in longer-term regular trainings held in Japan has not been possible recently as these trainings must be prioritized in the annual Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) survey of training needs; a survey that is completed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

118) Another option considered by the Lead Agency for Statistics is to keep a small pool of staff who will be tasked to develop statistics at the Atolls and whose job description also requires travel and being based in different Atolls as decided by the Lead Agency for Statistics for short periods. These positions could be built into the CADRE system when up and running. It is noted that implementing such initiative in a sustainable manner would require the exploration and development of cost effective approaches, including distance learning.

Key training requirements

119) Some of the key areas of training identified by the Lead Agency for Statistics include:

- Integration of data for economic statistics;
- Training in environment statistics;
- Training of trainers with a focus on basic statistics and data analysis – this will enable the Lead Agency for Statistics to provide training to other departments/ministries undertaking statistical activities;
- Basic statistics training: Required for all NSS including Island Councils (with a focus on the use of administrative data for statistical purposes);
- Data Analysis (for staff of the Lead Agency for Statistics in particular);
- Data editing and cleaning of survey data, including the usage of supporting software such as STATA and CSPro;

- Quality assurance checks of administrative data – this is particularly important for departments/ministries outside the Lead Agency for Statistics providing data which feeds into the development of official statistics. If their role is to provide data which is clear of errors and ready for use in producing official statistics, training must be provided on what this entails;
- SDG training addressing new indicator requirements and the methodologies associated with these indicators.

3.3 Other institutions of the National Bureau of Statistics

120) As depicted in Figure 2 (chapter 3.1), there are four components of the National Bureau of Statistics, which include the Lead Agency for Statistics and three other institutions: The National Centre for Information and Technology, the Department of National Registration, and the National Archives. The mandates/tasks assigned to these three institutions are outlined below.

3.3.1 National Centre for Information and Technology

121) The National Centre for Information Technology (NCIT) was established in March 2003 by the Government of Maldives as the main government agency for the development, promotion and propagation of Information Technology (IT) in the Maldives. The mandate of the NCIT includes:

- To establish, operate, maintain and develop the Government Computer Network;
- To advise the Ministry on the National IT Strategy to fully harness and exploit IT for economic and social development and to plan, co-ordinate and implement the programmes and projects to achieve the IT Policy of the government;
- To implement e-Government by co-ordinating and developing Information Systems Plans of the Government for greater productivity, wider public access to information and faster delivery of services;
- To carry out reviews and studies in technology and policy, in cooperation with industry and other Government agencies, to accelerate the development of the local IT and allied industries;

- To establish guidelines, benchmarks and standards necessary for Maldives at that time and to disseminate the information to the public;
- To review and approve proposed information systems plans of government agencies and parasitical;
- To provide IT consultancy to Government agencies and the private sector. Conduct a periodic information systems survey in the Government to foster a well-coordinated and integrated Information Systems;
- To advise and assist Government ministries and agencies concerned in the review and design of IT education and training curricula to ensure to develop the human resource in IT for the Maldives;
- To develop and carry out awareness programs to improve wider public awareness and understanding of the national IT vision, plan projects and activities.

3.3.2 Department of National Registration

122) Tasks assigned to the Department of National Registration include the following:

- Issue the national identity card for all Maldivians 10 years and above, issue a temporary identity card for children under 10 and manage all related activities;
- Issue National identity number for the birth certificate of children under 10;
- Issue a temporary document if ID card expired or lost;
- Train on maintenance of the population registry in a standardised manner across the Country, and assist all stakeholder agencies;
- Provide identification card to staff assigned by different government agencies and maintain these records;
- Establish a Civil registration database and manage all related activities on Civil registration;
- Maintain Births and Death records in the Maldives and do the below stated related activities;
- Maintain and manage the birth registration forms;

- Information obtained from birth registration forms /copies to be shared on request on a standardised manner;
- Information obtained from death forms /copies to be shared on request on a standardised manner;
- Provide trainings to those who maintain information on births at Regional, Atoll and central level;
- Collect, compile and analyse data on births and deaths in the Maldives;
- Maintain the Online birth and death registration system established under the E-government.

3.3.3 National Archives

123) According to the Maldives National Archives Act, 16/2011, the Maldives National Archives is mandated as follows:

- To maintain properly all materials stated under the Act;
- Encourage to properly maintain all records, photos and related materials relevant to Maldives;
- Identify the relevant all records, photos and related materials that needs to be maintained at the archives apart from the materials stated in the Act;
- Ensure proper maintenance of all records, photos and related materials in compliance with International standards and the national standards in line with national economic situation and modern means;
- Enable easy access to all materials maintained at the Archives;
- To make all materials maintained at the Archives interesting to the public;
- Conduct researches to safeguard all materials maintained at the Archives;
- As stated in the Act, to obtain the ownership of all intellectual properties maintained at the Archives;
- Maintain duplicate copies of all intellectual properties maintained at the Archives in accordance the intellectual property rights;

- Publish the materials maintained at the Archives in accordance the intellectual property rights;
- Inform all agencies on how to properly maintain the documents of government agencies until handed over to the Archives;
- Publish the indexing, manual and leaflets and guidebooks on all materials maintained at the Archives;
- Determine the ways to destroy/discard the documents of the government agencies that needs to be destroyed/discarded;
- Provide trainings to all government agencies on how to properly maintain records;
- Obtain and maintain modern means to properly maintain all materials maintained at the Archives;
- Provide assistance and cooperation to all users of the materials in the Archives; and
- To work on all other matters to achieve the objectives of the Act and to do the work mandated to the Archives even not stated in the Act.

3.4 Dissemination policy and practices

3.4.1 Policies guiding dissemination of statistical data

124) The Lead Agency for Statistics does not have a dissemination policy in place; there are however plans to develop such policy in the near future, possibly with some external assistance. In preparation, the Lead Agency for Statistics has reviewed policies from other countries.

125) A dissemination policy needs to address a number of practical concerns related for example to the quality dimension of timeliness. Timely completion and issuance of statistical products typically rely on the availability of few staff who are able to handle the technical work. Hence if one or two critical staff in the same division are away on extended leave, training or other, pre-established dissemination dates cannot be met.

126) The “Statistical Regulation of the Maldives 2012” includes the following provisions on maintaining confidentiality when publishing statistical data:

“The statistical information obtained from the data collection operation shall be published as aggregated totals, in accordance with the principles of statistical compilation.”

“Information obtained shall not be disclosed or published in a manner that will disclose the identity of the provider.”

“Confidentiality must be accorded to any information that is obtained from permitted data collection operations, which would disclose the identity of the provider.”

With respect to the related roles of the Lead Agency for Statistics and other institutions that produce official statistics, the regulation states:

“Prior to publishing/disclosing statistics collected under this act, Lead Agency for Statistics chief shall assure that the data collected is in accordance to the procedures and shall be reviewed prior to publishing for reliability, confidentiality and if information has taken in accordance with the standards and procedures.”

“Lead Agency for Statistics shall play a key role to form a network and facilitate other sectors to implement and work according to the standards and procedures of this act.”

“All key sectors are responsible to support the Lead Agency for Statistics in their work.”

3.4.2 Publications

127) The Lead Agency for Statistics currently produces a number of publications, both regular and those of a more ad-hoc manner which include the following:

Economic Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Consumer Price Index (monthly) – Producer Price Index (quarterly)⁸
Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Gross Domestic Product (quarterly)⁹ – Key Economic Indicators (monthly) – Population and Housing Census (see below for more details) – Household Income and Expenditure Survey – Economic Survey

⁸ Temporarily discontinued due to technical staff shortages and methodological weaknesses. To be revived with improvements on methodology.

⁹ Temporarily discontinued due to technical staff shortages and methodological weaknesses. To be revived soon with improvements on methodology.

Other

- Statistical Year Book
- Ad-hoc publications
- Maldives at a Glance (monthly)

128) Details for each of these publications can be found on the Lead Agency for Statistics website, although release calendars are not provided. For publication of survey results, delays are often experienced and they are hence simply released and made public when available. Earlier, release dates were published for Consumer Price Index (CPI), Producer Price Index (PPI) and quarterly Gross Domestic Product (GDP); these were however removed due to temporary discontinuation of publishing PPI and quarterly GDP figures. In the NSS as a whole, the MMA is the only agency to closely monitor release dates. However, in the case of delays (which is rare), users are not notified.

129) Prior to publishing, releases by the Lead Agency go through an internal validation process that includes checks by unit heads, then division heads, and a final review by the Chief Statistician.

130) If major revisions are made to statistical releases, such as a re-basing of the CPI or GDP then meetings will be held with key data users and the media to explain the revisions and the reasons behind them, with accompanying documentation placed on the website of the Lead Agency for Statistics.

Population and Housing Census publications

131) The publications generated for the latest 2014 Population and Housing Census are grouped in two on the website: (1) Standard Statistical Releases and (2) Occasional Statistical Releases. For the Standard Statistical Releases six main publications have been produced thus far:

- Population and Households
- Migration
- Education
- Employment
- Nuptiality and Fertility
- Housing and Household Characteristics

The Occasional Statistical Releases includes the following:

- Maldives Population Dynamics: Policy Prospects for Human Growth and Opportunity (UNFPA)

- Children in Maldives: Child Equity Profile (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF))
- Series of Women's leaflets produced for Women's Day 2016

3.4.3 Website

Overview

132) The Lead Agency for Statistics has its own website (www.statisticsmaldives.gov.mv) where nearly all key results generated by the office are published. In order to account for important information which was generated prior to the development of the website, historical information is added gradually. The Lead Agency for Statistics promotes their website through media and leaflets when the opportunity arises.

133) Other ministries of the Government also publish statistical information on their websites but data are often outdated. Improvement efforts could be supported by the Lead Agency for Statistics which could also publish statistical products of other NSS agencies on its own website, duly providing links to the originating agency.

134) Feedback received by the Lead Agency for Statistics on the website has not been overly favorable, with users complaining that the website is not user friendly. At the 2010 "world statistics day" fare, hosted by the Lead Agency for Statistics, attendees asked to provide their views on the website expressed a key concern regarding the difficulty in navigating the website to find the information they were seeking.

135) With the introduction of the current website, which is dedicated to statistics only (earlier, the website was one part of the website of the then Department of National Planning) some concerns have been addressed. However, improvements can still be made to improve the user friendliness of the site, for example by grouping information according to development area (children, air pollution, etc.) rather than by data collection or source (census, HIES, etc.). Also, time series data could be stored in a manner that facilitates access, so that users instead of having to visit numerous locations to extract long time series could access whole time series by one 'click.'

Website structure

136) The Lead Agency for Statistics website has five key pages providing the following information:

Home	Contains information on the latest updates provided by the Lead Agency for Statistics (includes releases of GDP, CPI, job vacancies, etc), the latest publications relating to key activities (e.g., population census), “quick statistics” on issues like tourist arrivals, imports and cpi, and links to “censusinfo” and “maldivinfo” which are discussed in more detail below.
Census	Contains Links to census results from the last 3 Population and Housing Censuses in 2000, 2006 and 2014. For each census the quality and magnitude of data releases has been increasing. For the latest 2014 Census the website has three key sections addressing the results of the survey; Standard Statistical Releases for a population census, Ad-hoc Statistical Releases and a link on the process for gaining access to their unit record data.
Surveys	Contains information for 4 surveys thus far; two economic surveys (2007 & 2013) and two HIES’s (2009-2010 & 2016 ¹⁰). Also included are details on the recently conducted surveys which have been approved by the Lead Agency for Statistics, along with the survey approval request form in English and Dhivehi (see chapter 4 for more details on the survey approval process).
Publications	Contains links to all the key publications produced by the Lead Agency for Statistics which are not related to survey activities, which are covered in “census” and “surveys”. Key economic indicators can be located in this section of the website along with the Maldives Statistical Yearbooks which date back to 2004. Another crucial link in this section of the Lead Agency for Statistics website is the “Statistical Archives of Maldives” which contains a wealth of information on data captured prior to the establishment of the website so users can track down historical information from some time back.
Press Releases	Contains press releases on general issues pertaining to Lead Agency for Statistics activities, including updates on survey activities and job advertisements, and are presented in both English or Dhivehi or sometimes both.
Downloads	Contains important documents that can be downloaded such as job application forms and Survey approval forms.
DataSets	By filling an online form on this page, users can request for Census and HIES Micro datasets.

¹⁰ Limited information posted as the HIES data editing was ongoing at the time of finalizing the present report.

Website monitoring

137) At the moment, there is no procedure in place to monitor visits to the website, though there are plans to establish this in the future.

3.4.4 Innovative dissemination of products

MaldivInfo

138) MaldivInfo is being developed as the national data dissemination platform. MaldivInfo is based on the UN DevInfo platform which has been implemented in the Maldives since 2007 with the support of UNICEF.

139) MaldivInfo has a user-friendly interface, with powerful presentation and reporting tools to assist data analysis, compare values and assess trends. During 2007 the version of MaldivInfo 1.0 was launched with 282 indicators and over 70,000 data values embedded in Devinfo version 5.0 and later was updated with 417 indicators embedded in Devinfo version 6.0. MaldivInfo can be accessed through the website of the Lead Agency for Statistics (<http://www.devinfo.org/maldivinfo/libraries/aspx/home.aspx>) and is also available as a desktop version.

140) Currently the usage of the tool is not monitored. Information on use is only guided by requests for assistance in using the tool. An e-learning module on MaldivInfo is available from the website.

CensusInfo

141) CensusInfo was developed to bring census data to the public in a more user friendly manner so that reports can be generated on the spot and customized profiles can be accessed for a specific area (eg, for a more focused view of the development status of an atoll for instance). As with MaldivInfo, CensusInfo is an adaptation of UN DevInfo technology.

142) CensusInfo has a user-friendly interface with a powerful presentation and reporting tools to assist data analysis, using census data. With the CensusInfo tool up and running, users are able to generate reports at the national and Atoll levels that include tables, graphs and maps on key indicators for each recent census.

143) CensusInfo is available as a desktop application and as web version (<http://devinfo.org/censusinfomaldives/libraries/aspx/Home.aspx>)

Other

144) Other initiatives by the Lead Agency for Statistics to inform users of statistical products and promote general awareness of the situation in Maldives through statistics have included:

- The conduct of a World Population Day Quiz in 2016, which could be accessed through the Lead Agency for Statistics website. Prizes for the quiz were awarded, which included Mifi access and free Gigabyte (GB) of data for 3 months. Such initiatives encourage the people of the Maldives to better understand the situation of the Maldives as reported in statistical products generated by the Lead Agency for Statistics, with a special focus on results of the 2014 Population and Housing Census for this quiz.
- A video demonstrating some of the key findings from the 2014 Population and Housing Census, developed with the support of UNFPA can also be found on the Lead Agency for Statistics website. The video provides information on the structure of the population of the Maldives, linking the findings with how the results can be used to develop better policies in the Maldives.

3.4.5 Access to survey micro-data

145) The Maldives Lead Agency for Statistics allows access to census and sample survey micro-data following specific requests and only via set procedures stipulated in an MoU between data provider and data user. Before the data is made available both parties sign off on the MoU which includes the following guidelines:

- NBS will process, anonymize and document the data before handing it over to the user;
- Any data analysis carried out by the user for purposes other than those agreed to in the intended study will be considered a breach of the agreement;
- The user agrees to use the anonymized data for the said purpose only and will not share with other users, or copies of it made for deposit with international organizations or databases;

- The user will implement security measures to prevent unauthorized access to the micro-data acquired, and will destroy the micro-data upon completion of the analysis, which is to be confirmed in writing to the NBS;
- Any books, articles, conference papers, thesis, dissertations, reports or other publications produced using the data set obtained from the NBS should cite the source as NBS. A softcopy of any such document produced should also be made available to NBS.

146) Whilst the Lead Agency for Statistics reported that this approach is cumbersome and they would like to see the response burden on their office reduced, it is the view of the assessment team that the process should remain in place to ensure that confidentiality requirements are met.

3.4.6 Other dissemination issues

Metadata

147) Metadata for various data sources can be found in a range of locations, but is not well stored overall on the Lead Agency for Statistics website. For surveys such as the HIES, a technical report was produced which contains extremely useful information on the sample design, survey preparations, field operations and data processing. The report also contains highly valuable information on the concepts and definitions used in the survey which is crucial for analysis.

148) For other surveys such as the recently conducted 2014 population and housing census, a range of subject matter reports have been developed which each contain useful metadata information on how to interpret the results. For users who request copies of the census unit record data, a copy of the data dictionary from CPro can be provided on request which will explain the structure of all variables in the dataset for the format requested (CPro, Excel, SPSS).

149) Ideally, a metadata repository should be established for all surveys run by both the Lead Agency for Statistics and other government departments who choose to undertake a survey after receiving clearance through the Lead Agency for Statistics. In order to achieve this, a document detailing the range of metadata which should be produced for each survey as a minimum should be generated by the Lead Agency for

Statistics and followed, and made part of the clearance process for survey activities conducted outside the Lead Agency for Statistics.

Handling ad-hoc requests

150) As discussed above, the Lead Agency for Statistics has five divisions with the Statistics Development & Coordination Division being mandated to disseminate data through various means; by telephone, website and e-mail communications. This Division, with support from the Statistical Surveys and Data Processing Division, is able to respond to ad-hoc requests when they come in, although a facility with the Lead Agency for Statistics to provide clarification on released results or details on metadata has not been formally established. As with results produced in standard publications, responses for additional ad-hoc information is checked by unit heads, then division heads and reviewed by the Chief Statistician before release.

3.5 Stakeholder relations

151) Relations and communications with stakeholders are central to building and maintaining trust in official statistics. Outreach activities such as media events and trainings to strengthen statistical literacy among users are opportunities to explain the business of the NSS, demonstrate the value of its products, build relations and establish trust. User-friendly products and consistent, professional branding enhances the visibility of the Lead Agency for Statistics and helps build its reputation as a professional Government institution.

152) The assessment team met with a selected group of stakeholders of the NSS, including from the Ministry of Finance and Treasury, the Maldives National University, the Maldives Customs Service, the Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture, and MIRA. Some agencies were represented by frequent users of official statistics and others were represented by their NSCC members. Thus, both the user and producer community was represented.

153) Users highlighted the value of official statistics for research and commended the Lead Agency for Statistics for installing procedures that had enabled access to micro-data (see earlier in this chapter). They also pointed out the value of alerts on updates to earlier published statistics, the opportunity to raise queries through the Lead Agency

for Statistics website, and the press conferences and other media events organized by the Lead Agency for Statistics in the context of major statistics releases.

154) There was some discussion on the low awareness of available statistical products on the Lead Agency for Statistics website and the website of other NSS agencies, as well as of lacking statistical literacy among key users and the general population. This had on some occasions led to resource-requiring queries to the Lead Agency for Statistics for statistical products that were already available in the public domain; and on other occasions to users releasing stories based on anecdotal evidence, misinterpreted official statistics, or a mix of both.

155) Discussing the possible establishment of a Statistical Council that would represent the user communities, participants mentioned the following organizations and communities as prospective members: The Maldives Tourism Association, the Maldives Fishermen's Association, selected other business associations or private sector representatives, the Maldives National University, and media representatives. Participants cautioned against establishing the Statistical Council as a high-level forum on the basis of experiences with other similar councils becoming de-active shortly after their establishment.

3.6 International cooperation

156) The assessment team met representatives from UNFPA and the preparatory scoping mission also met representatives from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNICEF. In terms of statistics cooperation with the Lead Agency for Statistics, these organizations provide technical assistance to statistical collection exercises (censuses and surveys), support analysis of statistical data, and occasionally involve the Lead Agency for Statistics in statistics development components of larger projects.

157) The UN in the Maldives comprises around 20 organizations¹¹, with only four - UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and World Health Organization (WHO) - being resident agencies, each having around three staff placed in the country.

¹¹ Non-resident Agencies include the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations

- 158) The other organizations provide support from the distance, through temporary consultancies or project staff, or through regional and global activities. This is the result of a number of years of declining development assistance following the graduation by the Maldives in 2011 from the UN category of Least Developed Countries (LDCs).
- 159) The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) works on the basis of a “One UN” programme (UN Development Assistance Framework, 2016-2020) with four thematic areas (youth and children, gender, governance, environment and climate change), each outlined into a dedicated work plan. This programme, as well as the SDGs and other global commitments drive the data needs by international organizations, and should ideally also form the basis for capacity support to the NSS of the Maldives.
- 160) Under “Principles and Key Strategies” for the implementation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), it is stated that “Specific focus will be given to enhancing national statistics capacities in the area of sustainable human development.” However, in the results framework for the plan, statistics development is only mentioned in one of the four themes, namely environment and climate change, where strengthening of environment, agricultural and rural statistics, including for the SDGs, features rather prominently. Elsewhere, official statistics is mentioned only as a means of verification and NSS agencies as the source of the evidence for progress.
- 161) Discussion touched upon the current institutional set-up where the UNCT has to go through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and then through the layers of the Ministry of Finance and Treasury in order to contact the Lead Agency for Statistics. The absence of a national development plan from the Government, with an accompanying statistics programme, was seen to further complicate cooperation and prioritization of development support by the international organizations to statistical activities and statistics development. Reminded of the “YES” manifesto by the current Government (Youth, Economy, Security), participants welcomed the development of the manifesto into a more detailed development strategy and plan.

- 162) The need for a number of line ministries to establish statistical units, as required by the SRM, was pointed out as an important element of strengthening the overall range and quality of statistical products of the NSS.

3.7 Assessment and recommendations

3.7.1 Lead Agency for Statistics location, structure and staffing numbers

- 163) Whilst it appears clear the Lead Agency for Statistics is located within the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in the current organizational structure of the Ministry of Finance and Treasury, there is no reference to its existence. Only reference is made to the three other institutions of the NBS; the DNR, NCIT and National Archives. A name also needs to be assigned to the Lead Agency for Statistics (such as NSO), to separate its functions from these other institutions. It is also then recommended to adjust the current name of the NBS to better reflect the roles of the entities it comprises, which currently go far beyond the provision of official statistics. A more appropriate name could be something along the lines of the Statistics and Information Management Division.
- 164) The Civil Service has signed off on a Lead Agency for Statistics structure plan which includes over 100 positions, yet less than half of these positions are filled. Throughout consultations of the review team, there were no indications that this would change in any significant way in the near future, especially since there have been efforts in the past to reduce civil servant staff numbers (including that of the Lead Agency for Statistics) through redundancies.
- 165) It is thus recommended that the current structural plan of the Lead Agency for Statistics be reviewed with more realistic staffing numbers which can be achieved over time, based on expected budget constraints. This can include some vacant positions, if there is a realistic chance these positions could be filled in the near future. The staff numbers in the Corporate Affairs Division in particular could be better balanced with the staffing numbers in the technical divisions of the Lead Agency for Statistics, especially with current budget constraints.
- 166) More realistic workplans of each division can then be developed based on these updated staff numbers. Modifications to the Lead Agency for Statistics structural plan can be made if the situation changes in any significant manner over the coming years.

3.7.2 IT issues

167) It appears that support of two IT persons for the Lead Agency for Statistics is sufficient most of the time, but when major surveys are in place, this support is severely stretched. Survey budgets should include an additional one or two IT people to support the survey, so as to not take away from the ongoing IT support to regular Lead Agency for Statistics functions. Updating the firewall (around 15 years old) and a new domain controller (around 13 years old) should be a priority in the near future.

3.7.3 Training

168) Development of human capacity of statistical staff within the Lead Agency for Statistics and the wider NSS was stressed as a priority issue by the Minister of Finance and Treasury. In order to address this, an obvious starting point would be to staff the Statistical Training & Research Division within the Lead Agency for Statistics, and start developing a programme to address capacity shortfalls. The Lead Agency for Statistics has recently initiated a dialogue with the Civil Service Commission to include basic statistics training and skills needed for the staff working in the statistics area of the government, and these dialogues need to continue as a priority.

169) A sustainable option is for experienced staff of the Lead Agency for Statistics to deliver training to the extent possible, and have this included in their work plan in addition to their other work in their respective divisions. Resources (financial and human) will need to be found to address this additional workload which will get placed on these staff.

170) On top of these recommendations, three key tasks have been raised above in chapter 3.2.6 of this report which should form the starting points for the operations of this division when established:

- Revisit the development of the CADRE system, and see it through to conclusion, to ensure staff within the Lead Agency for Statistics are suitably compensated, and skillset requirements for each position are clearly detailed;
- Investigate options for addressing the shortfalls in statistical learning at university level, including the possibility of linking up the Maldives

University with Colombo University to expand the opportunities for students in the Maldives to receive training in statistics;

- Develop a statistical training program within the Maldives government, identifying and addressing all key statistical training requirements for the Lead Agency for Statistics and NSS as a whole. This should look at providing 'training of trainer' training to the Lead Agency for Statistics so they can provide their own basic statistics training to other government departments of the Maldives.

3.7.4 Dissemination policy

171) The Lead Agency for Statistics is aware of the need to develop a dissemination policy and has taken the first step towards this by reviewing examples from other countries. Some level of assistance, in the form of outside expertise or guidance would facilitate the further progression of the initiative, and it is recommended that such support be secured as soon as possible.

3.7.5 Website related recommendations

172) A quick review of the website during the mission showed that a wealth of time series data was available for some series, although the manner in which this was stored made it cumbersome to undertake analysis spanning longer time series. The Lead Agency for Statistics should continue their efforts to improve accessibility to time series data.

173) It is also recommended that the structure of the website is changed to organize and present information by development area or topic, rather than by data source as is currently the case.

174) Improvements in the manner in which metadata is stored for surveys could be made. Whilst for some surveys this information can be located after searching the website and examining existing reports, for other surveys it can not be located. This metadata repository should cover both Lead Agency for Statistics run surveys, and other government run surveys which go through the Lead Agency for Statistics approval process. The sort of information which should be included in the metadata include:

- Objectives of the survey
- Survey scope/coverage

- Data collection strategy
- Data collection period
- Classifications/Standards adopted
- Edits/Cleaning undertaken
- Imputation methods adopted
- Description of variables and codes in the data set
- Copy of questionnaire
- Response rates

175) Additional sample design information should be added for sample surveys, including; sample frame used, sample size and selection strategy, domains of interest, sample allocation.

3.7.6 Stakeholder relations

176) The Lead Agency for Statistics maintains good relations with their national and international partners, who all know and appreciate the Chief Statistician and her staff. Stakeholders acknowledge the challenges faced by the Lead Agency for Statistics to coordinate statistical activities in the Maldives, in particular in terms of resource constraints. The absence of a coordinated statistical programme for the NSS is an obstacle to effective coordination, including with international organizations.

177) User engagement happens on an ad hoc basis for example through press conferences when flagship statistical products such as the population census results are released. It is good practice to hold such press conferences; however, the current low participation by the media points to a need for change.

178) User engagement in general would benefit from more structure and regularity, for which a users' forum such as a statistical council could provide useful and strategic advice. A central objective of enhancing user engagement should be to strengthen trust in official statistics in the Maldives.

179) It is recommended that the Lead Agency for Statistics consider options for improving and expanding outreach activities to increase awareness and knowledge among media in particular, of the statistical products of the NSS and their use.

180) Users' satisfaction surveys are indispensable for improving the relevance of statistics as well as the relations with the users in general. It is recommended to implement the plan to monitor use of the Lead Agency for Statistics website, and consider putting in place a regular satisfaction survey among key users of official statistics of the Maldives.

3.7.7 International cooperation

181) The newly acquired role of the Lead Agency for Statistics as the coordinator of statistics for SDG implementation in the Maldives should be taken as an opportunity to raise the visibility of the Lead Agency for Statistics and lobby for additional funding from international organizations. A comprehensive NSS statistics programme and the establishment of task forces within the NSCC that focus on priority SDGs or SDG themes, as recommended elsewhere in this report, could be used actively to improve communication with international organizations for more effective and coordinated support to statistics development in the Maldives. In this regard, an NSCC task force on environment and climate change statistics would fit the priorities of the UNDAF particularly well, and could possibly be supported through the funding that UNCT members (FAO, UNFPA, and UNDP) have committed to the related output of the UNDAF during 2016-2020.

182) In terms of engagement in international statistical activities, the Maldives has been very active during the past years. At the time of the first assessment mission, the Chief Statistician of the Maldives chaired the ESCAP Committee on Statistics, and she and her staff were frequent participants in regional and international statistics conferences, workshops and trainings. Due to budgetary tightening in the Government, the assessment team was informed that permission to travel to participate in such activities was increasingly difficult to come by and that therefore, the continuation of engagement at current levels was highly uncertain.

183) International engagement by the Lead Agency for Statistics plays a vital role in strengthening the statistical capacity of the Maldives and reinforces the commitment and ability to adhere to international standards. Experience gained from such engagement benefits staff and management, allowing for frequent interaction with other NSSs for beneficial exchange. It is recommended that regular budget be sought to allow such engagement to continue.

Chapter 4:

Data sources, registers, processes and quality

4.1 Overview of data sources

184) There are three primary data sources for official statistics in the Maldives:

- Administrative systems
- Censuses
- Sample surveys

185) **Administrative systems** generate administrative data from administering laws, regulations, policies and plans of the Government. While the primary purpose of these data is to manage and monitor the business of the State, some are used to generate official statistics on society, the environment and the economy as an information service to the Government and the general public.

186) **Censuses** by definition cover the whole population of interest, with the three most commonly produced national censuses addressing “population and housing”, “agriculture” and “economic/business”. To date, the Maldives has undertaken population and housing censuses only, with the first modern type of this census conducted in 1977 (a rudimentary exercise was conducted already in the year 1911).

187) **Sample surveys** as the name suggests, involve a collection that obtains data from a subset of a population, in order to estimate population attributes. This approach is generally adopted to minimize costs and increase the speed of reporting results, but also result in sampling errors associated with the survey results due to not enumerating the whole population of interest.

188) This chapter gives an overview of how these different data sources are performing in the Maldives, including the processes of how they are managed, quality issues associated with their production, and recommendations on how things could be improved in the future. For details on censuses and surveys the focus will be on the most recently conducted of each type.

189) Given the costs associated with conducting survey activities, both censuses and surveys, it is always desirable to undertake a thorough assessment of existing administrative data to justify the survey content and conduct. The Lead Agency for

Statistics reported they do these assessments of existing administrative data sources prior to designing and launching any new survey.

4.2 Administrative data

190) Administrative data refers to information collected primarily for administrative (not research) purposes. This type of data is collected by government departments and other organizations for the purposes of registration, transaction and record keeping, usually during the delivery of a service. In general these administrative systems are managed by government departments, and the Lead Agency for Statistics within the NBS requires a legal process to be followed to enable it access.

4.2.1 Range of administrative data

191) Using the annual Statistics Yearbook of the Maldives the following key administrative data sources have been identified:

Geography	Rainfall, Temperatures
Environment	Waste Transportation
Population	Births & Deaths Registration, Marriages & Divorces Registration
Housing & Public Infrastructure	Construction, Housing Finance
Employment	Establishments statistics, Civil Servant statistics, Political Posts, Vacant Jobs
Health	Medical Personnel, Outpatient/Inpatient flows, Others
Education	Student enrolments, teacher numbers, A-level & O-level passes, Technical education
Law & Order	Logged cases, Number of detainees, Police personnel, Other
Fisheries & Agriculture	Fish catches, Fishing vessels, Fishermen, Imports of Agricultural produce from Male
Tourism	Number of tourists, bed numbers
Transport	Vessels, Vehicles, Air passenger movement
Communication	Telecommunication services, Cargo, Mail, Broadcasters
Electricity & Water	Electricity consumption, Billed water consumption, Water distribution
Public Finance	Revenues, Expenditures, Foreign grants
Money & Banking	Central Bank Stats, Assets & Liabilities, Interest Rates

Foreign Trade & BoP	Imports, Exports
Pension & Social Protection	Pensions paid, Employees in Pension schemes
Political Parties	Voters, Parliament members, Local Council members

4.2.2 Access by the Lead Agency for Statistics to administrative data

192) At present, the Lead Agency for Statistics does not have general access to unit-level data from administrative systems. Some producers of administrative data provide their data to the Lead Agency upon request in the form of summary tables or aggregated data.

193) In some cases, MoUs have been established between owners of administrative data and the Lead Agency for Statistics, but these are rare and not fully implemented. Examples include an MoU with the Ministry of Economic Development (MED) to access the annual accounts of companies, and with the Maldives Inland Revenue Authority (MIRA) for aggregate industry level data from tax records for use in the national accounts. In the case of the latter, the MoU includes the sharing by MIRA of a list of all business establishments registered. Ad-hoc data requests by the NBS to MIRA are covered in the Tax Administration Act.

4.2.3 Quality assurance

194) Generally speaking, procedures and validation rules for assessing and checking the quality of administrative data for use for official statistics in the Maldives are insufficient. As data is not received in sufficient detail to allow for processing and editing, the Lead Agency for Statistics performs the limited internal consistency checks that are feasible upon receipt of already aggregated data from other agencies.

195) In the case of some of the administrative data used in the national accounts compilation, adjustments are made as required using the results of internal quality assessment processes such as the compilation Supply and Use Tables.

4.2.4 Communications between administrative data collectors and the Lead Agency for Statistics

196) The Lead Agency for Statistics reported proactive efforts to influence the design and scope of administrative data to increase their statistical potential. They however also reported that only on a few instances had they been informed when administrative forms were created, reviewed or revised, limiting their opportunities to advice in the process.

197) At the same time, the Lead Agency recognizes that more efforts could be made to inform administrative data holders on the use and potential of administrative data for statistical purposes and to provide guidance on how to improve the data from a quality perspective.

198) In all, communication both ways could improve, with the Lead Agency as well as the administrative data holding agencies stepping up their efforts to improve the quality and use of this important source of data for official statistics. A strengthened National Statistical Coordination Committee (NSCC) could be the forum to further pursue this matter, with the support of a policy-level Statistical Council (see »Assessment and recommendations« of chapter 2).

4.2.5 Plans to improve administrative data

199) A few initiatives are currently in place within the Maldives to improve the access to and use of administrative data. Some examples of such initiatives include:

- Activities aimed at linking databases across different agencies with the maldivinfo database housed by the Lead Agency for Statistics, with an example being the OpenEMIS Portal for the Maldives, established by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).
- The development of an island level portal being tested in one atoll, that will be ultimately replicated to other atolls, designed to assist island level data to be shared across sectoral agencies providing administrative rights at different levels
- Work on developing a statistical business register with the MED, Maldives Internal Revenue Authority and other stakeholders to standardize coding systems to enable harmonization

- NBS is working with the Ministry of Health, Department of National Registration and National Centre for Information and Technology to improve the Vital Registration System administrative data. This work is ongoing, with plans to extend to include marriage related data in Judicial Administration.

4.3 Censuses

4.3.1 History of census activity

200) The Maldives National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS), 2010-2019, lists Population and Housing Census activities in the Maldives as follows:

- Already conducted: 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2006 and 2014 (initially planned for 2016)
- Planned but not conducted: 2011 Mini-census

201) The census in 2011 did not receive policy level approval and was therefore cancelled. Following issuance of policy instructions to undertake a register-based census, the Lead Agency for Statistics assessed the feasibility of applying such an approach. It was concluded that, given the way administrative registers on population were maintained and the legislation in place at the time, the conduct of a register-based census would not be feasible.

202) An economic census has never been conducted in the Maldives. The NSDS (2010-2019) envisaged an economic census to be conducted in 2018. At the time of finalizing the current report, a proposal to conduct an economic census immediately following the new population and housing census (proposed for 2020) was pending Cabinet consideration.

4.3.2 Quality assurance

203) Information provided by the Lead Agency indicated three sets of quality checks were undertaken during the conduct of the most recent census. The first was the pilot testing of the questionnaire to ensure it was providing the required information correctly, the second involved verification through administrative records that the population was suitably covered during fieldwork, and the third involved various quality checks during the manual editing, coding and data processing, which was programmed in CSPro. No post-enumeration survey was carried out.

4.4 Sample surveys

4.4.1 Past and planned sample surveys¹²

204) The Maldives National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS), 2010-2019, lists the recently conducted sample survey activities by the Lead Agency for Statistics dating back to 1985, along with a plan of survey activities for the 10 year duration of the NSDS. From this document it can be seen that the Lead Agency for Statistics was involved in the following six surveys during 1985-2009:

- Vulnerability and Poverty Survey (VPA) – 1997 and 2004/05
- Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) – 1993 and 2002/03
- Economic Survey (ES) – 2007/08
- Small Establishment Survey (SES) – 1999 and 2002/03
- Tourism Expenditure Survey (TES) – 1997 and 2001/02
- Large Establishment Survey (LES) – 1998-2004

205) Since 2009, the sample survey schedule has included the following activities:

- 2009/2010 Household Income and Expenditure Survey – carried out as scheduled;
- 2012-13 Economic Survey – carried out as scheduled but only covering the capital, resorts and the most populated 8 islands. Due to preparations for the 2014 population and housing census, the survey was not implemented in the remaining islands sampled;
- 2014 Household Income and Expenditure Survey – actually conducted in 2016.

¹² In addition to the Lead Agency for Statistics, some other agencies conduct surveys. For example, the Ministry of Health conducts the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), and the Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture conducts a fisheries cost and earnings survey. These surveys are not covered in detail in the present report.

Future plans

- 206) The remaining survey schedule will need to be adjusted and depend mainly on the census years. Due to the scale of the task, all Lead Agency for Statistics staff are involved in population censuses, and it is therefore not practical to conduct surveys during the years immediately prior to and following a census.
- 207) The Lead Agency for Statistics has proposed the next population census to be conducted during 2020 to allow sufficient time for census preparations after the upcoming elections (due in November 2018). The proposal is based on the experience from the 2014 census, which was conducted the year following the 2013 elections. At that time, political activities complicated census training and other census preparatory work, in particular in the outer islands.
- 208) A HIES was earlier scheduled for 2019, but with the latest HIES delayed until 2016, it may be postponed to 2021-2022. The sample design implemented in HIES 2016 was a representative survey at Atoll level, and was conducted in almost all inhabited islands. This proved to be very costly due to the high transportation costs that follows from the geography of the Maldives. Although such a comprehensive sample gives more accurate results at the Atoll level, the high cost factor is an issue and the possibility of repeating it in future will naturally depend on budget availability.
- 209) The 2016 HIES included a labour force module in line with the latest International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) recommendations. The Lead Agency plans to pilot a stand-alone Labour Force Survey (LFS) in the capital Male' in 2017, using Computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) and test this new technology for data collection. Such a survey will no doubt improve the quality of labour force statistics in Male, but the future and frequency of such a survey will need to be assessed in conjunction with other survey requirements, bearing in mind the limited resources of the Lead Agency for Statistics.
- 210) A nationwide agricultural survey is also being considered. Given there is no proper mechanism to capture agricultural production in the country through administrative records, it has been proposed by FAO within the »Global Strategy for the Improvement of Agricultural and Rural Statistics« to conduct such a survey in the Maldives. A sample design has been developed and a questionnaire is being finalised at present.

211) However, a stand-alone agriculture survey and LFS that is representative of the whole country are unlikely to materialise due to budget constraints. A more feasible approach being considered is to collect some minimum information for a frame for an agriculture survey during the planned 2020 population census (provided it gets approved) and to conduct an agriculture survey following the census, possibly as a module in another survey. Innovative approaches are required to conduct surveys in an island setting like the Maldives where sea transport across the islands vastly increases survey costs.

4.4.2 Role of Lead Agency for Statistics in survey conduct

212) Censuses and surveys involve a large number of activities by the Lead Agency for Statistics. For activities where the Lead Agency is short of the required expertise, assistance from international consultants is often sought.

213) Assistance from subject matter experts is for example sought for a pre-enumeration activity such as questionnaire development, which also requires multiple inputs from the Lead Agency for Statistics staff. The experts would typically review drafts produced by the Lead Agency for Statistics and provide guidance on modifications for improvements, largely based on international best practices. Pilot testing of survey questionnaires is led by the Lead Agency for Statistics and often involves testing in both Male and Outer Islands to get a better sense of potential problem areas with the forms. The Lead Agency survey team is most often involved in the pilot testing to ensure a better understanding by all of the survey objectives.

214) For some of the more technical aspects of the survey which include sample design, data editing, imputation and estimation, the Lead Agency for Statistics relies heavily on outside assistance, but still stays involved in the work to contribute and learn.

215) Data collection is led by the Lead Agency for Statistics for both household and business based surveys, and requires additional field staff to complete the task which will be supervised by staff from the Lead Agency for Statistics. A common practice is to assign staff from the Lead Agency to supervise field work, each being allocated 1-2 Atolls to oversee.

216) In general, when the Lead Agency for Statistics undertakes major survey activities, especially household surveys, more than half the team is involved in some form. Whilst such “all-hands-on-deck” exercises provide most staff members of the Lead Agency for Statistics with firsthand knowledge of the survey, it hampers the timely conduct of other office activities during the period of the survey.

217) In addition to survey data editing, report writing and dissemination is also done with the involvement of staff from other divisions of the Lead Agency for Statistics as a team work. Few staff have the capacity for these tasks and hence the few qualified and experienced staff are very much overloaded and work distribution and delegation is not possible to the extent that is desired. Regular in-house trainings on these tasks and practical statistics in addition to basic statistics is seen as the way forward.

4.4.3 Population frames

Household surveys

218) For household surveys conducted by the Lead Agency for Statistics, the population and housing census provides a household listing which is used as the sampling frame. The most recently conducted household survey is the Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) with fieldwork conducted during 2016. For this survey the 2014 Population and Housing Census was used as the frame for the sample selection.

219) The quality of the household listing from the census as a frame for future sample surveys depends on the following:

- a) How good the coverage was for the census when it was conducted (ie, did enumerators do a good job in identifying and listing all households and their members during the census enumeration);
- b) The level of change which takes place since the time of the census which would result in modifications to the household listing being required (eg, new dwellings being built/demolished, numbers of members in households changing, etc);
- c) The time lag between the census and the field work of the new sample survey (linked to “b”) .

- 220) In the case of the current HIES, given it is being conducted relatively soon after the census, the household listing information should be relatively accurate, unless of course there were significant changes in a short time since the census.
- 221) To account for changes which will have occurred since the census, at the time a new sample survey is conducted, updates to household lists is undertaken for those enumeration blocks selected in the survey, to ensure “newly built dwellings”/“abolished dwellings” have been suitably represented in the sampling to follow.
- 222) It is often desirable to separate the population of Maldives in to the three separate island types; “administrative islands” (where the majority of the residential population live), “resort islands” (primarily occupied by resorts for tourists), and “industrial islands” (islands outside the former two categories; these may be dedicated to agricultural activities, fish processing, airports or other, or may be under construction for resort or other purposes). Depending on the type of survey being conducted, a decision will be made on how fully each of these island groups will be covered, if at all.
- 223) Another issue of importance is capturing foreigners in surveys in which they are relevant. There are many foreigners living and working in labour quarters, which is not captured in surveys such as HIES and Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) at the moment, as only regular households are covered in the sample frame.

Economic surveys

- 224) The Lead Agency for Statistics does not currently have a statistical business register that could form the basis for future economic surveys. A nation-wide economic survey is currently being proposed for 2018, and an economic census has been proposed for 2020. The development of a statistical business register needs to be thought into these important activities.
- 225) For the latest economic survey, conducted in 2013, the list of establishments used as the survey frame was primarily produced from information provided by the Maldives Inland Revenue Authority (MIRA), the Ministry of Economic Development (MED), and some supplementary, administrative lists. After compiling and analyzing these lists it was found they were not up-to-date and incomplete, with variables such as main economic activity or employment numbers not included. Locations of the

establishments were also not readily available. To improve the list, the Lead Agency for Statistics conducted a survey to obtain a listing of the establishments, including details about the main activity and employment in Male, and other regions. Despite extensive follow-up during this exercise, listings from 52 islands were not received, which resulted in the survey being restricted to Male, Addu City and the 8 most populated islands in the Atolls. This eventually formed the sampling frame for the survey.

4.4.4 Quality assurance

226) A wide range of issues can affect the quality of survey results. In this chapter an overview of some of the more common issues linked to quality are discussed for both household and business surveys.

Coverage

227) Due largely to cost constraints, restrictions on the scope of survey activities have been taking place for surveys conducted by the Lead Agency for Statistics. Some examples are described in the subsequent paragraphs.

228) **2012-13 Economic Survey:** For the 2012-13 economic survey, the survey was limited to Male, Addu City and 8 selected islands, and thus not representative of the whole Maldivian economy. The islands selected excluded inhabited islands with a population of less than 2,500 persons. Also, not all economic activities were covered, with restrictions excluding Mining, Financial Sector, Real Estate, Public Administration, Activities of Households as Employers and Activities of Extraterritorial Organizations and Bodies. Finally, all economic activities that are not regulated by any government authority are considered as the informal sector, and despite their importance to the economy of the Maldives, were outside the scope of the survey.

229) **2016 HIES:** As stated above, the islands of the Maldives can be split in to three groups, “administrative islands”, “resort islands” and “industrial islands”. The 2016 HIES initially aimed to cover all three groups; however, due to resource constraints, only administrative islands were represented. On these islands where most of the residential population lives, the so-called »institutional population« was excluded (e.g. persons in prisons, hospitals, military barracks and school dormitories). Whilst the previously conducted HIES aimed at producing results at the regional level, the 2016 HIES set out to generate results of sufficient quality at the atoll level. Therefore,

sufficient sample was selected for each atoll to ensure results could be produced separately. Efforts were also made to ensure that islands of differing population sizes were selected, with estimates being required for four different population size groups: 0-500, 500-1000, 1000-2000, 2000+.

Response rates

230) High response rates play a very important role in the successful conduct of surveys, which in turn reduce or help eliminate response bias. What has been found in survey activities in the Maldives is that response rates differ quite significantly between household and business surveys, with sound response rates being reported for household surveys, and worryingly low response rates for business surveys.

231) **2012-13 Economic Survey:** It was reported that response rates for this survey were quite low at approximately 65 per cent. Such a low response rate will naturally introduce significant response bias in the results, which can't be ignored. Stratification adopted during the sampling phase, and appropriate weighting procedures will help eliminate some of this bias, but great caution still needs to be exercised in using results from this survey largely due to these poor response rates.

232) **2009-10 HIES:** For the last completed HIES in 2009-10, response rates were estimated at nearly 90 per cent, with rates on the outer islands being better than on Male. A gift of MVR 500 (just over USD 30) was paid to each household for responding to the survey. To maintain response rates sufficiently high to ensure quality, replacement households were selected in each enumeration block and brought into the sample when required.

Classifications

233) Where possible, internationally agreed classifications are being adopted for survey activities conducted by the Lead Agency for Statistics, both household surveys and business surveys. For survey activities performed outside the Lead Agency for Statistics there will be less control over whether internationally agreed classifications are adopted for these surveys where applicable. In the “request for survey approval” form, required by other government departments to complete before commencing a major survey activity within the Maldives, information is not currently sought on the classifications used for the survey. This could result in inappropriate classifications

being adopted by these departments if consultation and guidance is not provided by the Lead Agency for Statistics.

234) For the Lead Agency for Statistics, examples of classifications adopted for recently conducted surveys include the following:

2012-13 Economic Survey

- ISIC: International Standard Industry Classifications – Rev 4
- ISCO: International Standards Classification of Occupation
- CPC: Central Product Classification
- COICOP: Classification of Individual Consumption According to Purpose

2016 HIES

- ISIC: International Standard Industry Classifications– Rev 4
- ISCO: International Standards Classification of Occupation – 08
- COICOP: Classification of Individual Consumption According to Purpose
- CPC: Central Product Classification – Ver 2.1

Submitting survey requests (outside the Lead Agency for Statistics)

235) When other government departments wish to conduct a survey within the Maldives they are required to request survey approval from the Lead Agency for Statistics. The survey request form is located on the Lead Agency for Statistics website in the “Survey” page, in both English and Dhivehi - English link: <http://statisticsmaldives.gov.mv/nbs/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/SurveyApprovalEng.pdf>

236) Key information requested in this form includes the following:

- Organization conducting the survey
- Survey objectives
- Survey coverage
- Survey timing
- Collection methodology
- Sampling strategy

237) Departments looking to conduct a survey at times do not complete the form, conveying to the Lead Agency for Statistics that they consider their data collection to be an administrative rather than statistical exercise or a research project rather than an official national survey. A list of surveys approved since 2008 is listed on the website of the Lead Agency (<http://statisticsmaldives.gov.mv/survey-approval/>).

4.5 Alternative data sources – big data and geospatial data

238) In the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, much expectation has been attached to the use of alternative data sources for enhanced planning and monitoring for development results. Expectation has also been raised in relation to use of alternative (new and big) data sources for production of official statistics, and work is ongoing at the national and international levels to test the application of different types of data to strengthen official statistics in terms of comprehensiveness, accuracy, timeliness, or cost-effectiveness.

239) Notwithstanding the need to have a regular programme of statistical surveys in place (see assessment and recommendations at the end of this chapter); in the geographical context of the Maldives, a country consisting of vastly dispersed atolls and islands, the potential for cost-saving is particularly attractive given the disproportionately high cost of traditional data collections through sample surveys or censuses. The high policy priority accorded to environmental protection and climate change combined with the current weakness of environment statistics point to this sector as a priority for investigations into the application of alternative data sources and innovative approaches.

240) It is encouraging that some first initiatives have been taken in the Maldives towards using new data for the improvement of official statistics. These include the initiative taken by the Land Survey Authority to develop a Geographic Information System (GIS) system for the Maldives, which may be of use for the development of land accounts or other System of Environmental-Economic accounts (SEEA), and the plan to explore department store sales data for use in CPI calculation.

241) NBS has also initiated a project funded by UNDP and UNFPA to pilot big data opportunities in 2017. Work is underway to identify what would be effective uses in the Maldivian context. This may include piloting the use of mobile phone data to examine population movements, with a focus on the Male' area. Added information on

population movements would enable more accurate population projections, factoring in migration; this would support government planning to develop the Male’ area to host 70 percent of the country’s population.

4.6 Assessment and recommendations

242) While survey plans are developed in the Maldives, they are for a number of reasons rarely implemented according to plan. Survey plans and schedules are unclear or not communicated widely, change frequently, do not include survey activities of the whole NSS and do not necessarily respond to priority needs for statistics, partly because such priorities are not clearly established.

243) The Maldives is in need of developing a regular survey plan that is budgeted to allow schedules to be adhered to. Only with such planning and budget certainty can full use be made of the surveys and their design and implementation be planned so that surveys complement each other for cost-effectiveness and maximum topical and geographical coverage. A first step however, must be to clarify the statistical priority needs of the country.

4.6.1 Identifying statistical priority needs through the establishment of a National Indicator Set

244) In response to a recent SDG progress assessment questionnaire¹³ sent to the Maldives in February 2017, the Ministry of Environment and Energy reported an extensive list of activities which the Maldives had been undertaking to implement the 2030 Agenda. The reported activities included a preliminary data assessment on SDGs, which was undertaken by the NBS between April-May 2016, and a planned activity to meet with sectors (one on one) to (a) identify data gaps; (b) identify national priority targets; and (c) develop an indicator set for SDGs at the national level.

245) The assessment team fully support the plans to develop a National Indicator Set. For an indicator Set to be useful for statistical planning, it is important that it includes indicators of existing national and sectoral development plans, as well as new requirements emanating from SDG-related indicators.

¹³ Countries participating in the “Asia-Pacific Conference: Taking Collective Action to Accelerate Transformation of Official Statistics for Agenda 2030” (Bangkok, 27-28 March 2017), were requested to provide details of SDG implementation activities thus far. The response from the Maldives is available at: http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/Maldives_SDGs_implementation_progress.pdf

246) Subsequent to establishing the National Indicator List, a thorough gap analysis should be made against existing data sources (censuses, surveys and administrative data) to identify the necessary modifications and additions to the statistical programme to accommodate progress monitoring of the indicators.

4.6.2 What already exists

247) What is currently considered official statistics is outlined in the Statistics Regulation (36 areas in total); for each area, related responsibilities were initially outlined in the Designation of Statistical Activities (see Annex 7).

4.6.3 What is needed

248) Establishing a National Indicator List would be an undertaking by the national coordination mechanism for Agenda 2030 implementation, with the Lead Agency for Statistics providing technical advice. A suggested step-wise approach would include answering the following questions:

- What are the key priority indicators to measure progress against key objectives within each sector? (There used to be a national development plan which had many objectives across all key sectors, but this is not currently produced);
- Which of the indicators included in the global monitoring framework for the SDGs would the Maldives want to measure and hence include in the National Indicator Set?
- Are there any other key indicators from regional or sub-regional initiatives that should be included in the National Indicator Set?

249) Once a National Indicator Set has been developed, a gap analysis would seek to answer the following questions:

- Which of the included indicators cannot be monitored using available statistics?
- Can gaps can be filled by using administrative data sources? If yes, which modifications or other improvements are needed to existing data?
- How can the statistical census and survey programme best meet the requirements of the National Indicator List? Changes to the content of existing surveys? New survey types needed?

4.6.4 Other recommendations

- 250) A priority activity for the statistics office is the generation of an adequate business register, which would not only produce a sound frame for the sample selection for the next economic survey, but would also be a great source of selecting establishments for price collection for the PPI, which is currently done using purposive sampling, which is not ideal.
- 251) It is recommended that to the extent possible within the current regulation, the Lead Agency for Statistics expand its MoUs with producers of administrative data and improve their content in terms of specificity about what needs to be reported, how, and when.
- 252) More communication needs to take place between the Lead Agency for Statistics and administrative data providers to ensure this invaluable data source is being fully exploited. For example, the Lead Agency for Statistics should provide more inputs to the design of administrative data collections, and be included in discussions when these collections are modified.
- 253) Household survey response rates are solid, however, response rates for the economic survey is a major concern with strategies needing to be developed to address this issue prior to the next economic survey.
- 254) The Lead Agency for Statistics is exploring the use of tablets. It is strongly recommended to continue this effort as a means to achieving improved data accuracy and timeliness, and adding flexibility to developing questionnaires, at no additional costs.
- 255) The form developed by the Lead Agency for Statistics for approval of survey activities by other agencies, “request for survey approval”, needs to add a question on classifications being used where appropriate. This form can also be used to start developing better meta-data for surveys carried out by other agencies outside the Lead Agency for Statistics. Meta-data should include more information on classifications being used, sampling plan, scope and coverage of the survey, response rates (after survey), etc.

Chapter 5:

Economic statistics

5.1 Macro-economics

5.1.1 National accounts

256) The national accounts of the Maldives are produced by the Lead Agency for Statistics.

The organisational chart of the Lead Agency foresees that 7 staff members from the National Accounts and Economic Statistics Division should be in charge of the compilation of the national accounts but at the time of the first assessment mission only 2 staff members were assigned to this task. The compilation of the national accounts of the Maldives is governed by the Statistics Regulation of the Maldives from 2012 (SRM). The methodology and GDP estimates are shared and discussed in the National Statistics Coordination Committee.

257) The national accounts are broadly following the methodology of the 1993 manual of the System of National Accounts (SNA93) with however some significant conceptual discrepancies. Currently, annual GDP estimates are compiled at constant prices of 2003 and then reflatd to derive the current price estimates. In addition to this, quarterly GDP is compiled at constant prices from the production approach only. However, due to staffing and data issues, publishing of Quarterly National Accounts (QNA) has been discontinued until the methodology is refined and staffing issues are properly addressed. Experimental GDP compilations from the expenditure approach were conducted lately but the widening of the gap between the two approaches in recent years has prevented the Lead Agency from publishing them.

258) Until 2011, the GDP estimates were based on the year 1995 and were then rebased to 2003 using the Maldives Supply-Use Tables (SUT) from 2003. The very first experimental SUT were produced in 1995 and this exercise repeated in 1997. In 2007, a new SUT was compiled, but concerns about the accuracy of the results prevented the Lead Agency to use them to rebase the GDP estimates. The major data source used for the SUT 2007 compilation was the economic survey 2008 and complementing administrative data records.

- 259) The important macro-economic statistics used for the compilation of the GDP estimates are the balance of payments (BoP) and the government finance statistics (GFS) produced respectively by the Maldives Monetary Authority (MMA) and the Ministry of Finance and Treasury (MOFT). Other data and statistics are collected from many different sources such as from the Ministry of Tourism (MOT), the Maldives Customs Services (MCS), the Maldives Inland Revenue Authority (MIRA), other government agencies, commercial banks operating within the country and other administrative entities. Severe inconsistencies between these statistics and data sources lead to serious issues when compiling GDP estimates. In addition the Lead Agency conducts at irregular intervals the Household's Income and Expenditure Surveys (HIES) and Establishment Surveys (ES). The latest HIES was conducted in 2016 and the ES (which did not cover the whole country) in 2012/2013. National accounts series are compiled using Excel.
- 260) The present national accounts framework closely follows the "Macro-Economic Budget" (MEB) framework, consisting of a system of spread sheets and equations, used in the compilation of the annual national accounts in the 2003 base year series. In the original framework, a set of volume indicators were used to extrapolate the value added of the respective industries in order to estimate the annual GDP by production approach at constant prices. Under the framework (2003 base year), apart from the short term volume indicators, data from the financial statements of enterprises, price indices such as PPI, CPI and unit-value indices are incorporated into the system to extrapolate industry value added and eventually to estimate the GDP at both current and constant prices. For the production approach at constant prices, the changes from one year to another are estimated using 57 different volume indicators such as metric tonnes of fish catch, bed-nights, deflated value of imports of building materials, electricity generation, and production of desalinated water as well as other indicators for water, air and sea transportation, number of phone calls and deflated value of imports of consumption goods as a proxy for volume of domestic trade.
- 261) Classifications used for the national accounts are broadly based on international standards and are, when relevant, adapted to national specific contexts. Most important classifications in use are as follows:

- Classification for economic activities (revision 3.0), which is in compliance with the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities Revision 3 (ISIC-3.0);
- Classification of product and services in compliance with the UN Central Product Classification version 1.0 (CPC-1.0);
- Classification of goods and services for individual consumption by purpose in compliance with Classifications of Individual Consumption by Purpose (COICOP);
- Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System, generally referred to as the Harmonized System (HS) 2012 by the World Customs Organization;
- Classification of economic sector in compliance with the SNA93

262) Maldivian national accounts are implicitly based on the 2003 structure of the economy and based on scarce business data from both administrative records and surveys. Additionally, the estimates of each industry were adjusted by the estimated employment of that sector for the measurement.

263) of the non-observed economy. There is no release calendar of GDP estimates on the Lead Agency website, nor publicly available revision policy. Final GDP figures are available within a two year lag and estimates are revised yearly. National accounts are disseminated in the statistical yearbook and on the website of the Lead Agency.

264) More information can be found in the technical report on Sources and Methods of the GDP Compilation published on 17 April 2011 and revised on 12 February 2012, and in the document Rebased GDP-2003; both available on the website of the Lead Agency.

Assessment and recommendations

265) National accounts statistics are available on an annual basis and with a considerable lag, though the authorities have also begun to compile quarterly GDP data. While GDP estimates are made using both the production and expenditure approaches, these estimates are inconsistent. Furthermore, the base year for constant price estimates is 2003, so that recent changes in the structure of the economy are not reflected by the base period weights.

- 266) There is no GDP estimated from the income approach and the sequence of accounts by institutional sectors is not available. Furthermore, as mentioned above, national accounts series at constant prices are in general calculated by deflating correspondent series at current prices. However, in the Maldives, the current price series are derived inversely from constant price estimates for most industries with the exception of electricity generation and distribution, collection purification and distribution of water, construction, trade, air transport, financial intermediation, government, education, health and social.
- 267) In order to improve the quality (e.g. accuracy, coverage, timeliness) and international comparability of national accounts in the Maldives, the assessment team recommends (a) to improve the availability of data through the development of a comprehensive and integrated system of economic surveys; (b) to grant access to unit-level data from administrative records and registers; and (c) to increase the number of qualified staff in charge of the compilation of national accounts along with providing training opportunities and developing measures to retain experienced staff.
- 268) In the Maldives, the quality of national accounts would benefit from a more integrated production of economic statistics. The fact that each basic economic statistics is established from stand-alone data sources in each ministry or agency separately hampers the quality of national accounts figures. Short term statistics and structural economic statistics should cover all industries on a regular and timely basis in order to secure the indispensable sources of information for the compilation of national accounts series.
- 269) It is also proposed, at least for each base year, to compile a new set of Supply-Use tables (SUT) at current and constant prices. Ideally, final annual national accounts, including sector accounts, published 15 months after the reference year, should be systematically build on simplified annual SUT. Annual and quarterly accounts at current as well as at constant prices should rely on the production and expenditure sides and gradually be complemented by the income approach.
- 270) The adoption of a new statistics regulation in line with the UN Fundamental Principles for Official Statistics should ensure access to administrative data and registers at unit-level. In the meantime, an inventory of all existing administrative data that could be used for the compilation of national accounts series should be conducted. In that

respect, it is important the Lead Agency is consulted each time a new administrative data collection system is developed or revised.

271) In order to improve the quality and coverage of national accounts and in particular the estimate of the informal economy, administrative data and results from economic surveys and censuses should be complemented with those collected through regular and ad-hoc household surveys and in particular from the HIES.

272) Alongside these recommendations for mid-term institutional and programmatic capacity developments, methodological assistance provided by multilateral organizations such as IMF, Asian Development Bank (ADB) and ESCAP is essential to improve methodological soundness of GDP estimates. Coordinated support from both perspectives is a prerequisite to secure the sustainable development of economic statistics capacity in the Maldives and eventually comply with the SNA 2008 minimum requirement data set (MRDS).

5.1.2 Government Finance Statistics

273) The Maldives Government Finance Statistics (GFS) is produced by the Fiscal Affairs Division (FAD) of the Ministry of Finance and Treasury (MOFT). Four staff members in the Budget section are dealing with the GFS but none is working exclusively for the compilation of this statistics. There are no specific provisions on the compilation of the GFS in the Public Finance Act of the Maldives.

274) The GFS of the Maldives broadly complies with the methodology and format provided in the IMF Government Finance Statistics Manual of 1986 (GFSM 1986). Some initial work has been conducted to process the data according to the GFSM 2001. A longer-term objective remains the compilation of the GFS according to the newest IMF standards (GFSM 2014). One would also welcome the fact that the MOFT is deploying resources to produce its fiscal report based on the standards issued by the International Public Sector Accounting Standards Board (IPSASB). The objective of the IPSASB is to improve public sector financial reporting through international accrual-based accounting standards, for use by governments and other public-sector entities that would eventually improve the coverage and accuracy of the GFS. At the time of the second review mission (April 2017) the GFS was covering the central government and local councils according to the GFSM 1986 methodology. If the transactions are recorded in general on accrual basis, the Financial Public Regulation of the Maldives

requires MOFT to report on International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) cash basis.

275) The MOFT publishes the Statement of Government Operations down to the net lending/borrowing. Statement of other economic flows and balance sheets are not produced and the consumption of fixed capital appears under the statement of changes in fixed assets. Monthly data on revenue and expenditure are now published monthly but the reporting system is new, and its reliability is still to be improved. The actual GFS data is available with a significant time lag after the reporting period which is an issue for the MMA and the Lead Agency when compiling respectively the BoP and other external sector statistics, and the national accounts.

276) The MOFT shares the GFS data with the MMA, the Lead Agency, and the IMF. On the MOFT website monthly data are available at a rather aggregated level and only for the revenue and expenditure accounts. The MMA and the Lead Agency publish more detailed information on their respective website such as in tables 6 of the MMA Monthly Statistics publication. At the time of drafting this final report (June 2017) the latest data to be found for the Maldives in the IMF GFS yearbook was 2014, and data for 2012 and 2013 were not available. This is due to the fact that the GFS for the Maldives had to first be converted into the 2001 format. Last but not least, on the IMF Dissemination Standards Bulletin Board for e-GDDS, metadata for the Maldives GFS have been updated for the last time in 2011.

Assessment and recommendations

277) Despite some recent positive developments thanks to assistance by the IMF, there is an urgent need to improve the methodology, coverage, accuracy, consistency and timeliness of the GFS in the Maldives. Such progress can be achieved only with substantial investment from the MOFT in human resources, including know-how, and infrastructure devoted to the data collection, processing and dissemination of this important statistics.

278) It is recommended to update the Public Finance Act of the Maldives with provisions governing the production of the GFS and making a clear reference to the national legislation on statistics. This would be an excellent opportunity to consider the establishment of a specific section within the MOFT dealing exclusively with the GFS.

- 279) Important issues of coherence and timeliness between results from the GFS on the one hand and from the BoP and the SNA on the other have been reported. These can be explained part way by the fact that the BoP and the SNA have started or are in the process to migrate to the latest international standards. To ensure consistency in terms of methodology and results between these 3 inter-related macro-economic statistics it is recommended to establish a standing working group with statisticians from the organisational unit in charge of the GFS at the MOFT, from the MMA (BoP) and the Lead Agency (SNA) to share information and follow up on methodological development and eventually assess the consistency of the results to be published.
- 280) There are other challenges of more technical nature that have been identified during the 2 assessment missions in the perspective of a migration of the Maldives GFS to the 2014 standards as also recurrently mentioned in various reports by other sectoral partner organisations such as the IMF (e.g. revision of the chart of accounts). In order to address these shortcomings further technical assistance seems necessary to help establish a sound practice for the production of GFS and increased clarity and awareness about the internationally recommended methodologies. Improving timeliness in the compilation and dissemination of the GFS would also be welcome, in particular by the MMA and the Lead Agency.
- 281) One would also mention that it would have been extremely helpful for the assessors to have access to a more recent e-GDDS metadata report on the IMF Dissemination Standards Bulletin Board for the Maldives and that this could constitute a very easy short-term improvement to be implemented.

5.1.3 External trade statistics

- 282) The Statistics Section of the Maldives Customs Service (MCS), with presently 5 staff members, is responsible for collection of export and import statistics in accordance with the Customs Act and Customs General Regulation of Maldives. MCS, with the support of international partners and in particular UNSD is in the process of migrating to the latest version of the International Merchandise Trade Statistics (IMTS) 2010 that is broadly aligned with the concepts and definitions of the 2008 System of National Accounts (2008 SNA) and the 6th version of the Balance of Payments Manual (BPM6).
- 283) MCS collects customs declarations providing information on the quantity, values and country of consignment, country of origin and country of trading (in case of imports) or

destination (in case of exports). The declared values are inputted into the Automated System for Customs Data World (ASYCUDA World) which is latest version of ASYCUDA from August, 2016. From this system, data are extracted and stored in an Structured Query Language (SQL) commodity database. MCS uses the SQL Server management Studio to extract and query from ASYCUDA World data. Valuation of exports and imports is done in accordance with the WTO Valuation Agreement, respectively on Free on Board (FOB) value, and Cost, Insurance and Freight (CIF) value. The data validation process includes Risk Management Selectivity system, targeting based on profiling, critical items, potential risk for the completeness and correctness of fields in the declarations and arithmetic and logical control for the price of commodities (outlier detection). This validation process is mainly conducted on import and export data. The declarations are checked against value tables and are adjusted when found below expected values. MCS has so far never conducted mirror statistics quality checks with main trade partners.

284) Re-exports are not covered in the external trade data. Imports to embassies are covered in imports. Temporary imports are maintained separately and available for stakeholders such as MMA (BOP compiler). The Harmonized System-2017 (HS-2017) is used for the compilation of the external trade statistics since January, 2017.

285) Monthly and quarterly results of total trade in broad categories such as food items, fuels, and various HS sections are provided to the Public Relation section of MC for dissemination within first week of the next month. Annual external trade statistics are available in March of the following year along with revised monthly and quarterly figures. Data is also shared with other ministries and agencies of the macro-economic coordination committee and in particular with the MMA and the Lead Agency for Statistics for further processing and eventual dissemination.

286) With the exception of footnotes in hard publications and on the web, no comprehensive metadata is provided. No revision policy and schedule has been published but preliminary and revised data are clearly identified.

287) The Lead Agency for Statistics uses the external trade statistics for the compilation of the GDP and in particular imports and exports as volume indicator and the Unit Value Index (UIV) as a deflator. However, substantial errors have been detected in UIV since MCS in its data validation process focuses mainly on values rather than quantity. It is foreseen that MCS jointly with the Lead Agency will develop a methodology to compile

proper import and export price index. Import and export data are published by the Lead Agency in the Statistical Yearbook, the Key Economic Indicator (KEI) and Maldives at a Glance.

288) MMA is using external trade statistics for the compilation of the Balance of Payments.

Some corrections are done to adjust the data to the concepts and definitions of the 6th edition of the Balance of Payments Manual (BPM6) and in particular the adjustment of imports data from the c.i.f. basis to the f.o.b. basis using some predefined coefficient. MCS have been provided with the CIF, FOB, freight and insurance data up to 2015 to MMA. Therefore, MMA uses the FOB and CIF ratio of the previous years to determine the import FOB value from 2016. In addition, MMA makes the adjustments for coverage and undervaluation in arriving at the final FOB. If any major issues are detected in the data, MMA is taking contact with the MCS and the original dataset is corrected.

289) Technical assistance for the improvement of the Maldives external trade statistics is provided by the UNSD. The South African Revenue Service (SARS) shared its experiences to the workshops organized by the UNSD. IMF has provided assistance to the MMA.

Assessment and recommendations

290) The Maldives external trade statistics has recently benefitted from technical assistance from various multilateral and bilateral partners such as the IMF, SARS and UNSD and a roadmap is under development for the migration to the IMTS 2010.

291) During this process, it is recommended that the following issues are also addressed:

- The compilation of trade data relies exclusively on data from customs declarations. This hampers the external trade statistics to cover imports and exports of goods that are not subject to customs declaration such as the change of ownership or the estimation of trade values below customs threshold.
- There is a need, in particular for the compilation of the Supply-Use tables (SUT), the BoP and the national accounts to explore the possibility for MCS jointly with the Lead Agency for Statistics and MMA to produce more advanced trade data sets with the available information on customs declarations such as the conversion to other commodity classifications, trade indicators, external trade indices,

trade by enterprise characteristics and seasonally adjusted trade data. Advanced trade datasets are required for the compilation of the SUT and Input-Output Tables (IOT). It covers the trade data with registration number of foreign traders/companies, name of company, country of destination, country of origin, commodity, HS code, measurement units, quantity of goods, net and gross weights, definitions of goods, statistical value, freight, cost of freight and insurance etc.

- The importance to produce quality assessment and evaluations, and to make public the methodology for the compilation of the Maldives external trade statistics;

292) The migration to the IMTS 2010 and the recommendations for improvement provided above wouldn't be possible without an upgrade of the IT architecture for the customs data capture and processing alongside with a comprehensive training programme for staff of the MCS on concepts and definitions of the IMTS, best practices, quality monitoring and use of advanced technology.

5.1.4 Balance of Payment statistics

293) The Maldives's external sector statistics are compiled and disseminated by the Maldives Monetary Authority (MMA) and are broadly compliant with the methodological principles and classification system specified in the 6th edition of the IMF Balance of Payments and International Investment Position Manual (BPM6). MMA issues the annual Balance of Payments (BoP), with revisions in March and October, and annual external debt data for the government and the commercial banks on a monthly basis. MMA intends also to produce and disseminate the International Investment Position (IIP) in the near future.

294) Currently, eight staff members of the MMA Statistics Division are involved in compiling the external sector statistics (BoP, IIP and foreign direct investment (FDI)). MMA statistical activities are governed by Article 36 of the Maldives Monetary Authority Act (see also chapter 1.3 of this report: Other legislation related to statistics). Before release, data are reviewed by the MMA Assistant Governor of Monetary Policy, Research and Statistics and is eventually submitted to the IMF through the Integrated Correspondence System (ICS).

295) The BoP of the Maldives covers in principle all transactions between residents and non-residents and its statement contains all main categories: current account; capital and

financial account; net errors and omissions; and overall balance. Current account aggregates include data on goods, services, primary and secondary income. Data on the capital account are separately identified as capital transfers. Financial account aggregates comprise direct investment, portfolio investment, and other investments.

296) External sector statistics are compiled from a large number of data sources, most of them directly available from different ministries and agencies such as the Ministry of Finance and Treasury (MFT), the Ministry of Tourism (MOT), the Maldives Customs Service (MCS), the Maldives Inland Revenue Authority (MIRA), the Ministry of Economic Development (MED) as well as Commercial banks, other financial corporations and money transfer operators in the country. Other data sources, in particular concerning exports and imports of services are collected through specific surveys conducted by MMA.

297) Data on exports and imports of goods (External Trade Statistics/ETS) from the MCS is available monthly and some adjustments are made in order to complete missing information or to overcome methodological differences between the concepts and definitions of the BoP and the ETS. In particular, import data from the ETS at cif (Cost-Insurance Freight) valuation are converted into FOB (Free on Board) valuation and related insurance and freight duties reclassified to the service account. MCS have been providing cif, FOB, and freight and Insurance data up to 2015. Since then, in compiling the actual merchandise imports, MMA is taking FOB value as provided by the MCS till 2015 and use FOB/CIF ratio based on previous years data to determine import FOB value. In addition, MMA makes also adjustments for coverage and undervaluation imports at FOB.

298) Travel credits (receipts) and other services items are estimated on the basis of tourism goods and services tax receipts, tourism tax, green tax, duty free sales and the use of the withholding tax on services provided by non-residents which has improved the coverage of other services (debits) although it does not capture all cross-border services. This information from MIRA is complemented with data on Maldivians departing from the Maldives Immigration and surveys conducted by the MMA.

299) External debt are available monthly for the government (MFT) and the banking sector but do not include currently MMA and other non-financial enterprises. External debt service is available for central government only. For inward/outward FDI, MMA is

conducting a survey among the other private enterprises but the response rate, despite all efforts, is extremely low. MMA is using alternatively financial statement from private companies to overcome this shortage. Other private financial flows are estimated on the basis of the “mirror” data available at Coordinated Portfolio Investment Survey (CPIS) and at the Bank for International Settlements (BIS).

Assessment and recommendations

- 300) With technical assistance provided by the IMF these last years, the quality and reliability of external statistics in the Maldives have improved significantly. However some important challenges remain such as transactions occurring outside the country and no international counterparty data on tourism services available to validate revenue estimates. On the other hands, the coverage of external sector statistics, and in particular of service account of the BoP, could be further improved for important economic sectors such as construction, insurance and business services.
- 301) It is expected that the introduction of new statistics regulation, covering not only activities of the Lead agency but of all producers of official statistics including the MMA, will improve the participation and response rate of the private sector to surveys conducted by MMA. It is to be explored however if these surveys should be conducted by MMA, as ad-hoc data collection exercises, or be integrated in a coherent national framework of business surveys.
- 302) Access to and treatment of administrative data are to some extent curbed by the lack of development of uniform IT infrastructure and services across governmental agencies, including MMA. Electronic data collection and exchange would greatly improve the quality of the information and speedup the overall process.
- 303) It was also noted that no long time series of the external sector statistics according to the BPM6 were available on the website of MMA. In that respect, one could also mention that MMA should establish a data quality and revision policy and make it public on the web; this last point is actually relevant for all producers of official statistics in order to enhance trust in their products and services.

5.1.5 Monetary and Financial Statistics

- 304) The Monetary and Financial Statistics Section of MMA is responsible for the compilation and dissemination of monetary and financial statistics (MFS) under the provisions of Article 36 of the Maldives Monetary Authority Act. At the time of the first assessment mission, 2 staff members were dealing with these statistics. The compilation of the MFS is conducted based on information provided by various divisions of the MMA such as the Other Financial Institutions Division, the Insurance Division and the Banking Supervision Division. The monetary and financial statistics broadly comply with the methodology, concepts and classifications of the 2000 edition of the IMF Monetary and Financial Statistics Manual (MFSM) and the IMF Monetary and Financial Statistics Compilation guide 2008.
- 305) Beside the MMA, the MFS covers 8 commercial banks also known as Other Depository Corporations (ODCs) according to MFSM, of which one locally owned commercial bank, one commercial bank; partly owned by a local party, branches of four foreign banks, one locally incorporated subsidiary of a foreign bank and an Islamic bank; 2 finance companies; and 5 insurance companies.
- 306) Balance sheets of Other Depository Corporations (ODCs) are validated and directly uploaded by the respective ODC on the MMA extranet portal. Any further revision to an ODC balance sheet would be reflected on the MMA portal until the audit is conducted. The latter will be made available on the MMA extranet and the balance sheet considered as final. Other financial corporation reporting forms are mailed electronically to the Statistics Division or for some of them through the respective responsible division at MMA. Standard reporting forms have been prepared and slightly revised with the time in order to improve data reporting. Training was conducted amongst all financial corporations and concepts and definitions of the MFSM clearly explained.
- 307) Weekly data are available 5 days after the reference period and monthly data after 3 weeks. Since January 2017, monthly data are sent to the IMF through the Integrated Correspondence System (ICS) and are also made public in the monthly statistics publication of the MMA and MMA's statistical app "Viya". With the exception of footnotes and explanatory notes provided at the back of monthly statistics publications

and on the web, no comprehensive metadata is provided. No revision policy and schedule has been published but preliminary and revised data are clearly identified.

Assessment and recommendations

308) Substantive technical assistance was provided until 2011 by the IMF on monetary and financial statistics compilations with the objective to assist MMA to comply with the methodology, concepts and classifications of the 2000 MFSM and eventually to develop a framework for the compilation of monthly monetary accounts in accordance with international standards that can generate data for official use and publication, as well as for its submission to the IMF.

309) In order to align the MFSM to the methodology, concepts and classifications used by other macro-economic statistics that have been recently adopted or in the process to be implemented such as the BPM6, the SNA 2008, the GFSM 2014 and the IMTS 2010, it would be a midterm objective to migrate to the 2016 edition of the MFSM.

310) The assessors welcome the recently adopted MMA Remittance Regulation (2017/R-31) that will allow remittance intermediaries to be included in the MFS. This is definitely a major progress for monetary and financial statistics for a country counting such a large number of foreign workers.

5.1.6 Price statistics

311) The Price and Economic Statistics Section (PES), a section under the National Accounts and Economic Statistics Division within the statistics office is responsible for compilation of price indices in the Maldives.¹⁴ At the moment, the Maldives computes three different sets of price indices:

- Consumer Price Index (CPI) – computed and published monthly
- Producer Price Index (PPI) – computed monthly and published quarterly
- Construction Material Index (CMI) – computed quarterly but not published

¹⁴ In addition to the data collection and computation of the above-mentioned indices, the PES is also involved in the data collection of the International Comparison Programme (ICP).

5.1.6.1 Consumer Price Index (CPI)

- 312) The CPI is a measure that examines the weighted average of prices of a basket of consumer goods and services, such as transportation, food and medical care, etc. The CPI is calculated by taking price changes for each item in the predetermined basket of goods and averaging them; the goods are weighted according to their importance. Changes in CPI are used to assess price changes associated with the cost of living.
- 313) In the Maldives, the CPI collects prices for its basket of goods every month, with the exception of fish, which is collected weekly due to significant fluctuations in prices, and a geometric mean computed to generate a monthly price.
- 314) There are twelve main expenditure groups covered in the collection and reported on, which align with the United Nations international standard “Classification of Individual Consumption According to Purpose (COICOP)”.
- 315) The prices are collected in 5 regions; Male (the capital), three islands in the South, and one island in the North. In producing results for the CPI, results are published at three levels; “Republic”, “Male” and “Atolls”. Pricing at the moment is a little problematic, with some commodities in the basket of goods changing brands in selected stores on a regular basis. The current practice is not to price a new brand as a replacement unless there is a high level of confidence that the quality of the new brand is the same as that of the existing one.
- 316) The base period for the current CPI is June 2012, which was compiled using data from the most recent Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES), conducted in 2009-2010.
- 317) A rigorous edit checking process is undertaken in the calculation worksheets where price changes above 5% from one month to the next are double checked to ensure the correct item has been priced. Additional examinations of the items making the most significant change to monthly movements are also undertaken.
- 318) The Lead Agency is currently working to introduce Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) for price collections, however full adoption of PDAs has been delayed due to technical issues.

5.1.6.2 Assessment and recommendations of CPI

- 319) A HIES is currently being undertaken and can be used to re-base the CPI. The current HIES is being conducted in all Atolls of the Maldives, and thus the CPI price collection could be expanded to cover the outer atolls more comprehensively if desired, however this is not considered feasible due to costs and lack of consistent products in these areas. It is strongly encouraged to use the re-basing opportunity to thoroughly review the CPI basket, and simplify it where necessary to enable pricing of items to run more smoothly in the future. This should also result in a smaller basket of goods outside of Male where pricing of consistent items is more problematic.
- 320) The CPI price collection is currently trialling price collection via PDAs. Although this has been problematic to date (eg, not being able to update new items), it is recommended to try and resolve such problems and persist with this technology as gains in quality of information through edit checking in the field can be achieved.
- 321) The Lead Agency for Statistics also advised that the index computation is generated via many excel worksheets and thus prone to errors. It is thus recommended that the a review of the current approach be undertaken, and more automation adopted in the process to reduce error opportunities.
- 322) As stated above, the Lead Agency for Statistics indicated they are involved in the ICP, and as such, should look at including where feasible, items priced in this project activity in the CPI basket during the next re-base. This will simplify the overall price collection activities.

5.1.6.3 Producer Price Index (PPI)

- 323) The Producer Price Index (PPI) measures the average change over time in the cost incurred by domestic producers of goods and services. It can be described as an index designed to measure the average change in the price of goods and services either as they leave the place of production or as they enter production processes. The Maldives PPI is compiled at basic prices, which is the amount receivable by the producer from the purchaser for a unit of a good or service produced as output minus any tax payable, and plus any subsidy receivable, on that unit as a consequence of its production or sale. It excludes any transport charges invoiced separately by the producer.

324) Generally, sources used for deriving weights for a PPI include:

- Economic or establishment surveys
- Enterprise or industry surveys
- Business registers

325) The Maldives conducted an economic survey in 2007, however this source was not used due to the poor quality of data resulting from a weak business register, low response rates, and struggle of respondents to understand the data requirements. As a temporary solution, weights were derived using SUT 2007.

326) Responses rates for the PPI price collection are not too good, ranging from 50-70% each month. The “Hotels and Restaurants” sector is one of the weakest at providing data and given its importance to the PPI this is a concern. The PPI also does not include retail trade.

327) As with the CPI, close scrutiny is undertaken of prices in the PPI which change significantly from one month to the next to ensure they are legitimate price changes. These checks ensure that any significant price change from one month to the next is actually a legitimate change, and not a result of an incorrect price entered in the system or the wrong item priced.

328) Information on the PPI can be found on the website of the Lead Agency, dating back to the start of 2001 when it was first established. The data for the PPI is collected each month, but only quarterly publications are produced by the Lead Agency and published on the website. The results of the PPI are produced by sector and cover; “Fishing”, “Manufacturing”, “Processing fish products”, “Electricity, Gas & Water”, “Hotels & Restaurants”, “Transport, Storage & Communications”, “Education” and “Health”. The “Hotels & Restaurants” sector has the biggest contribution by far with 56 per cent of the overall weight of the PPI. Due to staffing and data issues, publishing of PPI has been discontinued until the methodology is refined and staffing issues are properly addressed.

5.1.6.4 Assessment and recommendations of PPI

329) The weights for the PPI need updating as soon as possible. The statistics office did have a tentative plan to conduct another economic survey in 2017 which would be an obvious source for such an activity, but this could be delayed for a couple more years,

with latest indications being the next economic census could be in 2020 and an Economic Survey in 2018, provided the budget is obtained and the survey is approved by the government. To address this delay, the PPI is currently being rebased using SUT 2014 to derive the weights. Either way, the next economic survey would need to take place far more effectively than the 2007 economic survey where the responses rates and other data issues resulted in it being inadequate for use for deriving weights previously.

- 330) A priority activity for the statistics office is the generation of an adequate business register, which would not only produce a sound frame for sample selection of the next economic survey, but be a great source of selecting establishments for price collection for the PPI, which is currently done using purposive sampling which is not ideal.
- 331) Thought needs to be given to addressing the poor response rates in data collection, especially with the “Hotels and Restaurants” sector which is very significant to the production of the PPI and has low response rates. The statistics office has indicated that they will prioritize this sector in the future by increasing the sample size, and stratifying by type of establishment (resort, hotel, guest house, safari, etc) and quality of establishment (5 star, 4 star, etc), which is to be encouraged.

5.1.6.5 Construction Material Index (CMI)

- 332) The Construction Material Index (CMI) is defined as an input price index which measures changes in the transaction price of main construction materials commonly used in the construction process by monitoring the materials cost factor for selected building and infrastructure types. It tracks the movement of transaction prices of CIF (Cost Insurance Freights) for imported building materials.
- 333) The CMI for Maldives was introduced in the 1st quarter of 2014, due to the significance of the construction industry to the Maldives economy. It was requested by the Ministry of Housing and Infrastructure due to the large demand for a construction index. The index is produced quarterly and is not published; it is used for internal purposes (national accounts) only.
- 334) The current CMI only covers prices for construction materials and therefore does not include a labor or equipment component. A list of commonly used materials in construction projects of the selected building and infrastructure types was produced and categorized into different material groups. The four different categories of building which were identified covered “residential”, “office”, “educational” and “mosque”.

5.1.6.6 Assessment and recommendations of CMI

335) In order to produce a more complete picture of the construction industry it may be desirable to price both labor costs and equipment costs, but doing so, especially for equipment will be a tricky process. At the moment the statistics office is not publishing the CMI, and this information is only being used as a deflator for the National Accounts. There is strong interest from the statistics office to expand the CMI to cover labour and equipment, but in order to do so, need guidance on what methodological issues need to be addressed. The review team offered to share some basic methodology to assist the statistics office make a decision on whether to develop this work further.

336) Any work on this issue should be done in consultation with the Housing Ministry who are undertaking similar work in producing a CMI. The statistics office also need additional training on this aspect of their work to build capacity, rather than focus on data providing for partners.

5.2 Business statistics

5.2.1 Short-term and structural business statistics

5.2.1.1 Overview and definitions

337) This chapter will assess some of the most important economic statistics based on the distinction between short-term (business) statistics and structural business statistics.

338) The objective of Short-Term Statistics (STS) is to describe the most recent developments of the productive economy. Data collection, processing and dissemination can be done separately by major economic domains of the ISIC or jointly. This depends greatly if short term business surveys are conducted centrally, by one agency, or in a more decentralised way as it is the case in the Maldives. Tourism, and Construction and Investment Statistics, for which data is provided monthly, fall under this category (STS). STS are published on monthly, quarterly and annual basis as indices which show the changes of the indicator in comparison with a fixed reference year. In general, the indicators do not represent absolute amounts or monetary values; but in some cases, absolute values or amounts are also provided. Primary data for the compilation of STS can be collected from surveys but also increasingly from administrative data and records. Key economic indicators were produced and released

every month until November 2013 and were eventually fully discontinued in August 2015.

339) On the other hand Structural Business Statistics (SBS) cover all economic activities and describe the structure, conduct and performance of businesses in a country. SBS are often broken down to a very detailed sectoral level (several hundred economic activities) and therefore the information contained in the SBS are in general more detailed than what can be found in STS for which timeliness is more important than granularity. The SBS results are generally collected and presented as monetary values, or as counts (for example, numbers of enterprises or persons employed). As for STS, the SBS can be compiled through surveys or administrative data and records; or a combination of both. It is a good practice to benchmark and calibrate STS indicators with the more detailed and to some extent accurate results of the SBS.

340) The enterprise surveys that were conducted in 2008 and 2012/2013 can be considered as SBS. To some extent, small establishment surveys (1999, 2001 and 2002) and large establishment surveys (1998-2004) could be assimilated to partial SBS since they did not cover the entire economy.

341) Quality and in particular accuracy, reliability, coherence and comparability of business statistics compiled through sample surveys strongly relies on the availability of a Statistical Business Registers (SBR). They serve multiple purposes, of which identification of resident economic entities in terms of territorial location, size and type of activity, relation between local units and institutional units, determination of the population universe (sample frame) for sample surveys, and studies on enterprises demography. SBR are key elements in the construction of integrated economic and business statistics information systems.

342) The maintenance of business registers are to be conceived as a system transforming data from administrative registers and records and business censuses into data fitted for statistical purposes. To a certain extent, the overall quality of the statistical registers can improve over time as the statistical registers receive feedback from structural and short time business surveys. Gradually, coverage and accuracy of statistical registers can be much higher than these provided by administrative records. According to the principle of the one-way flow of data between administrative sources and statistical business registers, confidential information contained in the latter should not be sent

back to the administrative data providers nor communicated to any other user outside the NSS. However, producers of official statistics may cooperate with the relevant administrations to improve procedures, methods and technology used to collect and process administrative data. In the Maldives, the Lead Agency for Statistics has not yet established an operational statistical register, which strongly hampers the possibility to conduct in a professional manner any business surveys in the country. The very first economic census will be conducted in 2018 according to the schedule for censuses and surveys.

5.2.1.2 2012/2013 Economic Survey (SBS)

- 343) The Economic Survey 2012/2013 was the second survey of its kind designed initially to cover all economic activities from large to small establishments of the Republic of Maldives. The first Economic Survey was conducted in 2007/2008. Beside its general objective to deliver detailed information on the size, structure and performance of the incorporated and unincorporated productive sectors, the results were also used for the compilation of national accounts, and in particular the compilation of Supply-Use tables and to derive the weights for the compilation of producer price index (PPI).
- 344) The Lead Agency for Statistics was in charge of the survey from the data collection to the dissemination but got substantial support from the Ministry of Economic Development (MED), the Maldives Inland Revenue Authority (MIRA) and other agencies who provided the list of establishments for use as survey frames. The Asian Development Bank provided funds for technical assistance on the data verification and analysis of survey results.
- 345) The Economic Survey 2012/2013 was initially designed to produce independent estimates of the economic activities carried out by establishments in Male, Addu and Atolls but due to budget constraint and the lack of a proper sampling frame was limited to Male, Addu and 8 islands with population over 2,500 according to the 2006 census. Economic activities pertaining to ISIC Division 02, (B) Mining, (L) Real estate, (O) public administration, (T) activities of households as employers, and (U) activities of extraterritorial organizations and bodies as well as economic activities undertaken within the households and not having any fixed business location (informal economy) were deliberately excluded from the survey.

- 346) For Male and Addu all establishment belonging to ISIC (D) Electricity, (E) Water, sewerage, waste, and (K) Financial services and all other establishment with more than 20 where covered (exhaustive survey). All other establishments not mentioned above, including ISIC (I) Accommodation and food service activities in resorts were covered through a sample survey. For the ISIC (I) a sample of 80 resorts was selected out of the 100 operational resorts in 2011.
- 347) The survey was designed to collect data of the accounting year 2011. However, if the establishments did not have records for 2011, 2012 data were taken. For establishments that did not maintain annual records, as it is often the case for small establishments, data of the previous month were collected instead. In order to have uniform reference period and to make the data of same characteristic additive it has been decided to convert the datasets from “annual” reference period into monthly reference period.
- 348) Despite major efforts, the response rate was rather poor and the financial sector (K) that was initially included within the exhaustive survey stratification was left out. For other economic sectors, the response rate was of 65% with the lowest one for tourist resorts with 39%. It seems however that the authority conferred to the Lead Agency (SRM, Part IV, art. 13) to fine non-response was for administrative and practical reasons not implemented. Eventually, since all small Islands within Atolls having less than 2,500 inhabitants have not been covered through this survey, the estimates of all parameters produced (extrapolation) are exclusive of those islands.
- 349) The 2012/2013 Structural Business Statistics based on the 2012/2013 Economic Survey was definitely a significant collective endeavour by the NSS and in particular for the Lead Agency for Statistics. The final product, despite the fact that it is not representative of the overall country economic activity, is a great achievement that should be made available.
- 350) A reasonable mid-term objective could be to be in a position to conduct every fifth year a business survey providing high-quality, internationally comparable Structural Business Statistics for the total economy of the Maldives complemented at more regular interval with sectoral surveys for economic sectors and industries that are weakly covered by other data sources such as administrative data. This set-up would also allow the Lead Agency for Statistics to assess the quality of alternative data sources provided by line

ministries and agencies, and eventually decide to move gradually sector by sector to an administrative data based business statistics.

5.2.1.3 Assessment and recommendations

- 351) In the Maldives production of economic statistics operates through the various custodian agencies having exclusive ownership over the production process of one or more specific statistical survey from the data collection to the dissemination of the final deliverables. A more collaborative approach of the production of economic statistics based on sound methodology, clearly defined scope and re-engineered data collection system would improve consistency and quality of the statistical output, enhance the efficiency of the production processes, reduce the amount of questionnaires and eventually free resources for more systematic quality checks and data analysis.
- 352) It is recommended that producers of official statistics in the Maldives analyse jointly with main users and according to internal needs (e.g. annual and quarterly national accounts, BoP...) what are the indicators and statistics that must be given higher priority and on which frequency they should be produced (monthly, quarterly, annually ...).
- 353) Data already available within the public administration should not be recollected; access to administrative data must have priority versus data collections. The burden on respondents is to be minimized; as a consequence, sample surveys must have priority versus exhaustive data collections. In that respect, the identification of the sample frame, the sample selection and the extrapolation of the results to the total population should be performed by the Lead Agency on behalf of other agencies.
- 354) The Development and maintenance of an updated statistical business register is essential for proper representation of different economic activities in business surveys. Such a register should include all businesses in operation in the different islands of the country, with basic information such as their main economic activity, employment of locals and foreigners. Use of such a listing frame for sampling will help reduce costs and minimize respondent burden. All relevant information collected by the Lead Agency and other producers through administrative records, statistical surveys and reporting should expand the scope and improve the quality of the register. IT tools should be developed in order to crosscheck information from the statistical register with other

administrative registers and data sources. The Statistical business register should be systematically used for sample surveys.

- 355) The preparation of a business census is a complex and resources intensive exercise and the assessors are expressing some doubts about the readiness and the resource capacity of the Lead Agency to conduct such an operation in 2017. It is proposed instead to further contemplate the possibility to organise jointly in 2020 the Population and Housing census with a business census covering all economic entities regardless of their economic activities and legal forms. This would give to the Lead Agency 3 more years to prepare accurately the logistics of this operation as well as to develop a concept for creating a statistical business register to be populated by the results of the business census.
- 356) In order to save resources, one could consider developing electronic data collection method that could facilitate a direct transmission of information to the Lead Agency and eventually the exchange of data between producers of official statistics.
- 357) In the meantime, it is recommended to conduct an inventory of all administrative data available in the Maldives and to assess from a quality perspective if they could be used for the production of economic statistics; actually this important recommendation should be extended to all statistical domains (e.g. environment, social and demographic statistics).
- 358) It is recommended to further improve the coverage and accuracy of economic statistics through a better estimation of the informal economy, remittances and other non-observed transactions. In general, quality, reliability and coverage of economic statistics could only benefit from a more extensive use of statistical information collected through household surveys like the Labour Force Survey, Living Standards Survey and the Household Budget Survey.
- 359) Last but not least, from a legal and institutional perspective, all these recommendations for the improvement of business statistics across the statistical system of the Maldives would definitely need a new legal base in the form of a statistics regulation or act.

5.2.2 Tourism statistics

5.2.2.1 Regulation on the Collection of Data for the Compilation of Tourism Statistics

360) The Ministry of Tourism within the Republic of Maldives produced a “Regulation on Collection of Data for the Compilation of Tourism Statistics”, which came in to force commencing 19 June 2011. The regulation focuses on data that must be provided to the Ministry of Tourism by all tourist accommodation establishments registered in the Maldives. Data to be submitted includes:

Weekly/Monthly occupancy reports	Two forms are in operation, one (Form A-1) which collects data from resorts and hotels each week on the number of guests & number of occupied rooms each day of the week. The other form (Form A-2) collects data from all guest houses and safari vessels each month, with the same information of number of guests & number of occupied rooms/cabins each day of the month.
Monthly report on tourist arrivals by nationality and tour operator	Data for these reports covers the number of new guest arrivals at each establishment by tour operator and nationality. Totals for each month are all that is required from each establishment.

361) The regulation states that fines are imposed by the Ministry on establishments they do not provide the required information, and if this occurs more than three times the Ministry reserves the right to revoke that establishment’s license. Despite these documented penalties for not providing required information, responses from guest houses and safari vessels, which is collected through Form A-2, is estimated at roughly 40-50%. Responses from resorts/hotels are 100%. A reason provided by the Ministry of Tourism for the poor response rates for guest houses and safari vessels was the lack of staff available to properly monitor the statistics from these facilities.

362) Although not stipulated in the regulation, any changes made to a tourist accommodation establishment (eg, change in number of beds), must be reported to the Ministry. The Ministry also keeps track of the number of operating establishments through the provision of operating licenses. The regulation does not cover any other statistics relating to tourism outside this scope, such as tourist arrivals from immigration or exit surveys of tourists as they leave Maldives.

5.2.2.2 Additional statistics collected relating to tourism

363) As alluded to above, a regulation is in place to collect data from all tourist accommodation establishments across the Maldives with a focus on bed occupancy and tourist arrivals. Two additional activities of significance to tourism statistics are also undertaken:

- **Tourist arrival data:** Data on tourist arrivals comes from the Department of Immigration and Emigration, and is provided to the statistics office on a monthly basis. The data received however is summary tables and not raw data, thus not enabling the statistics office to undertake any significant data checks or additional analysis. Having said that, the statistics office did report that some validation checks are undertaken with the data collected from tourism accommodation establishments.
- **Exit survey:** The exit survey is conducted twice a year and collects data from approximately 1,500 departing visitors. The focus of the sample survey is on collecting data pertaining to visitor profiles, perception of Maldives, expenditure, activities undertaken and satisfaction. The sample selection strategy for the exit survey is outsourced and believed to be representative of all visitors to Maldives. Initial views on the quality of data suggests information collected on expenses is of poor quality.

5.2.2.3 Outputs produced on tourism statistics

364) Reports produced by the Ministry of Tourism: The Ministry of Tourism produces three main statistical reports providing :

- **Monthly report:** The monthly report is a simple 2-page document which details the tourist arrivals by country for the month, comparing with the equivalent month of the previous year. Breakdowns by the method of arrival (air/sea) are also included along with accommodation capacity details, bed nights details and occupancy rates.
- **Quarterly report:** This document is a 10 page summary produced each quarter and provides more in-depth graphical analysis of tourist arrivals by country. Focus is on the major tourist providers in each region, examining the percentage changes with the corresponding period the previous year.
- **Annual report:** This report is the most detailed and produced each year. It is roughly a 50-page document which has numerous contributors outside the Ministry of Tourism which includes;

Ministry of Finance and Treasury, Department of Immigration and Emigration, National Bureau of Statistics, Maldives Inland Revenue Authority, Maldives Monetary Authority, Maldives Customs Services and Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Studies / Maldives National University. There are 5 key sections in the publication which address; Tourist Accommodation, Tourist Arrival Trends, Economic Indicators of Tourism, Airlines Statistics and Tourism Forecasts.

365) Tourism outputs in the Yearbook: In the annual Yearbook produced by the Lead Agency for Statistics, tourism statistics covers the following:

- Flow of tourists by nationality
- Total registered bed capacity and number of accommodation establishments, by type
- Bed capacity and utilization by month
- Resorts by type of lease holder, operator and management
- Tourist arrivals, and tourist bed-nights by month
- Proportion of tourism revenue and expenditure to central government budget
- Monthly distribution of tourist arrivals by region
- Bed capacity of tourist resorts by Atoll
- Monthly distribution of tourist arrivals by country
- Bed capacity of tourist resorts and the distance from Male' International Airport

Most of this information is produced from the data received from the Ministry of Tourism.

5.2.2.4 Assessment and recommendations

Production of a Tourism Satellite Account

366) During discussions with the Maldives Lead Agency for Statistics, they expressed an interest in developing a Tourism Satellite Account (TSA), a standard statistical framework and the main tool for the economic measurement of tourism. Given the huge importance of tourism to the economy of Maldives this should be seen as a priority, under the *Tourism Satellite Account: Recommended Methodological Framework 2008* (also known as the TSA: RMF 2008), to enable the harmonization and reconciliation of tourism statistics from an economic (National Accounts) perspective.

367) The Ministry of Tourism (MOT) have started work on developing a TSA, which has entailed two consultancy visits, and thus recommendations on how to proceed with this work. Discussions also involved NBS and MMA, but this work is still pending given capacity constraints and staff limitations within the MOT. Data on domestic tourism has been collected by MOT and also in the most recent HIES, so once resource issues have been addressed it is recommended that work recommence in this area given its importance. A key element for this work to proceed is for agreement to be made between the NBS and MOT on who takes the lead. In particular, there is a strong need for better quality data on expenditures from visitors to Maldives, which needs addressing.

5.2.2.5 Other recommendations for consideration

368) **Improve response rates from guest houses and safari vessels:** If the number of guest houses and safari vessels is significant (Form A-2 data collection) then it would be worthwhile finding the staff to follow-up on these monthly responses. If fines start getting issued, and a license or two revoked, responses rates will improve dramatically.

369) Develop a MoU with Department of Immigration and Emigration for “Tourist Arrivals”
raw data: Data on tourist arrivals comes from the Ministry of Tourism, who receives it from the Department of Immigration and Emigration, and then provides it to the Lead Agency for Statistics on a monthly basis. The data received however is summary tables and not raw data, thus not enabling the Lead Agency for Statistics to undertake any significant data checks or additional analysis. Establishing a MoU directly with the Department of Immigration and Emigration to receive the full data direct would overcome this problem.

370) **Exit Survey comments:** Having a 14 day period for data collection could introduce significant bias in survey results. Need to look at options to have a more representative sample over the 12 month period, especially if expenditure data is going to be a key component of this survey

5.2.3 Construction statistics

371) CConstruction statistics are compiled by the Ministry of Housing and Infrastructure (MoHI), which employs 35 people. MoHI does not have a dedicated statistical unit and there are currently no legal provisions governing the production of construction

statistics. Data provision for housing and shelter as well as affordability of housing in relation to household income is the mandate of one person.

372) Construction statistics follow the provisions of the SNA 1993, ISIC rev 3, which include:

- 4510 Site preparation
- 4520 Building of complete constructions or parts thereof; civil engineering
- 4530 Building installation
- 4540 Building completion
- 4550 Renting of construction or demolition equipment with operator

373) The construction sector represents a large share of the total value added in the Maldives, second to only tourism and fisheries. After the Indian Ocean Tsunami of 2004, the share of construction increased due to harbour and airport projects. At the time of the review, around 1,500 housing units were under construction. Indicators such as imports of building materials, number of permissions, construction labour, and expatriate labour are used by the Lead Agency for annual GDP estimations.

374) Data are compiled from several sources. Almost all construction materials are imported; these data are provided by MCS. Estimates of the number of locals employed in the construction sector are obtained from the Industry and from population censuses. The average expatriate labour force is obtained from MoHIs records. Actual cost of construction by private sector companies is not available but the total budget is available. A database of housing permits has been developed by MoHI. The earlier conducted Large Establishment Survey and Small Establishment Survey were used to establish baseline estimates of the Value Added of the Construction sector.

375) The MoHI publishes quarterly building implementation on its website. The MoHI provides annual data to the NBS on the number of permits through a fixed format. They have time series data by residential starting from 1990. The Lead Agency publishes a number of annual construction statistics on its website:

- Buildings authorized Number of dwellings
- Buildings authorized Floor area (thousand m) by Residential and Non-residential
- Buildings completed Number of dwellings
- Buildings completed Floor area (thousand m) by Residential and Non-residential.

376) In early 2008, the Economic Research and Statistics Division prepared a concept paper for the index and calculated weights from imports of construction materials, for use in deflating the imports of such materials in the NA. Construction statistics are compiled by the responsibility of The Ministry of Housing and Infrastructure (MoHI) which employs 35 people, but there is not any statistical unit. Only one person is mandated to provide data for Housing and shelter; Affordability of housing in relationship to household income. Currently, any act or regulation related to Construction statistics has not approved.

Construction statistics is following the provisions of the SNA 1993, ISIC rev 3 which include:

- 4510 Site preparation
- 4520 Building of complete constructions or parts thereof; civil engineering
- 4530 Building installation
- 4540 Building completion
- 4550 Renting of construction or demolition equipment with operator

377) Construction sector represents large share of the total value added in the country aside from Tourism and Fishery sectors. After Tsunami, the share of construction was increased due to projects of the island harbour and airports. Currently, 1500 housing units are being built in the Maldives. The indicators such as imports of building materials, number of permission, construction labor, and expatriate labor are used in the annual GDP estimation.

378) Data is collected from many different sources. Almost all of the construction materials in the country are imported and the data is provided by MCS. An estimate of the number of locals employed is obtained in the industry, the information of the Population Censuses. The average expatriate labor force in construction was obtained from the MOHI's records. The actual cost of constructions done by the private sector companies is not available but total budget is available. The database for the housing permits has been developed by MOHI and ID code is provided by Government office. The registration only includes establishment with over 100 thousand US\$. In addition to collecting the data, NBS conducted the SES and LES for the baseline estimates of Value Added of the Construction sector.

379) The MOHI has published quarterly building implementation on its website. The MOHI provides annual data to the NBS on number of permits through certain format. There have time series data by residential starting from 1990. The NBS also publishes annual data on its website by followings indicators:

- Buildings authorized Number of dwellings
- Buildings authorized Floor area (thousand m) by Residential and Non-residential
- Buildings completed Number of dwellings
- Buildings completed Floor area (thousand m) by Residential and Non-residential.

380) In early 2008, the Economic Research and Statistics Division prepared a concept paper for the index and calculated weights from imports of construction materials, for use in deflating the imports of such materials in the National Accounts (NA).

5.2.3.1 Assessment and recommendations

381) Construction is a very important part of Maldivian GDP and total budget; therefore, it is important to estimate the sector as accurately as possible. Currently, construction activities that do not have real cost or permit for private are not sufficiently captured. In this regard, it is important to enhance the cooperation between the NBS and the MoHI which would benefit the estimation of the unofficial construction activities.

382) In order to produce annual construction estimates from administrative data, specific questionnaires with related indicators should be requested to be filled from MoHI; or a model for Proxy data can be designed.

383) Additional data collection and statistics to measure in more detail construction and real estate is needed. A Memorandum of Understanding should be developed and signed by the Lead Agency and the MoHI for the Lead Agency to gain access to detailed data of use for national accounts estimation.

Annex 1:

Concept note

Strengthening the National Statistical System of the Maldives

Proposal by the National Bureau of Statistics and ESCAP

February 2016

Background

Statistics Division of the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in the Maldives and ESCAP Statistics Division have been discussing the feasibility and modalities of a forward-looking review on the Maldivian national statistical system since April 2015 triggered by the fact that the Maldives reached the mid-term review point for its current NSDS implementation (2010-2019) as of end-2014. The bilateral discussions resulted in a scoping mission by ESCAP to the Maldives on 19-22 October 2015.¹ The main objective of the mission was to determine the substantive focus, arrangements and timing of an institutional and business process review of the national statistical system of the Maldives—to be conducted together with UNSD and other partners—as part of the implementation of the Regional Programme on Economic Statistics.

The scoping mission and discussions with the stakeholders revealed that the current NSDS has not been used as a planning or coordination tool for statistics development or statistical outputs in the country. A consultant was commissioned by UNICEF to conduct the mid-term review of the NSDS but was not able to complete the work. In his notes, he emphasized the need to build trust in official statistics in the country as well as to improve the business process for data collection, compilation and dissemination in addition to increasing/improving staff capacity. The substantive focus of the review, elaborated below is based on consultations with key actors in the national statistical system of the Maldives.²

The forward-looking review coordinated by ESCAP is expected to feed into the revision of the NSDS which will be supported by PARIS21.

The Maldives NSS is involved in a wide range of domain-specific capacity building activities/programmes which all have an assessment or evaluation component conducted at various depths and lengths, e.g. agricultural statistics, environment statistics, etc. Such existing reports will be used in the preparatory phase of the forward-looking review.

¹ The mission report and supporting documents are available separately.

² Environment and agricultural statistics, which are addressed through separate projects are not covered by the scope of the review since they are addressed through initiatives that ESCAP is already involved in and is in a position to coordinate with.

Substantive scope of the forward-looking review

- The review will analyze legal provisions and institutional setting, including coordination within the NBS (with the Department of National Registration –DNR and , the National Centre for Information Technology –NCIT) and among national agencies that comprise the national statistical system, with particular reference to economic statistics;
- The review will focus on the improvement of economic statistics production and dissemination under which national policy priorities such as economic growth and employment are covered;
- The review will position economic statistics development within the current monitoring requirements of the 2030 agenda by taking into account the indicators based on economic statistics included in the global monitoring framework (if during the review process the Maldives has devised national SDG indicators the national monitoring framework will be used instead);
- The review will indicate gaps and give recommendations for modernization of statistical information systems; more specifically integrating economic statistics production and dissemination in the Maldives with reference to statistical infrastructure requirements and standards such as GSBPM and GSIM;
- The substantive scope of economic statistics will be determined by the first six components of the Core Set of Economic Statistics³: prices and costs, demand and output, income and wealth, money and banking, government and labour market.⁴
- In addition, the following will be taken as reference in developing the review tool:
 - Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics
 - All relevant international standards and classifications for national accounts and economic statistics
 - Relevant quality assurance frameworks, e.g. DQAF
 - e-GDDS and other plans for improvement
 - Standards for business processes and information management, e.g. GSBPM, GSIM

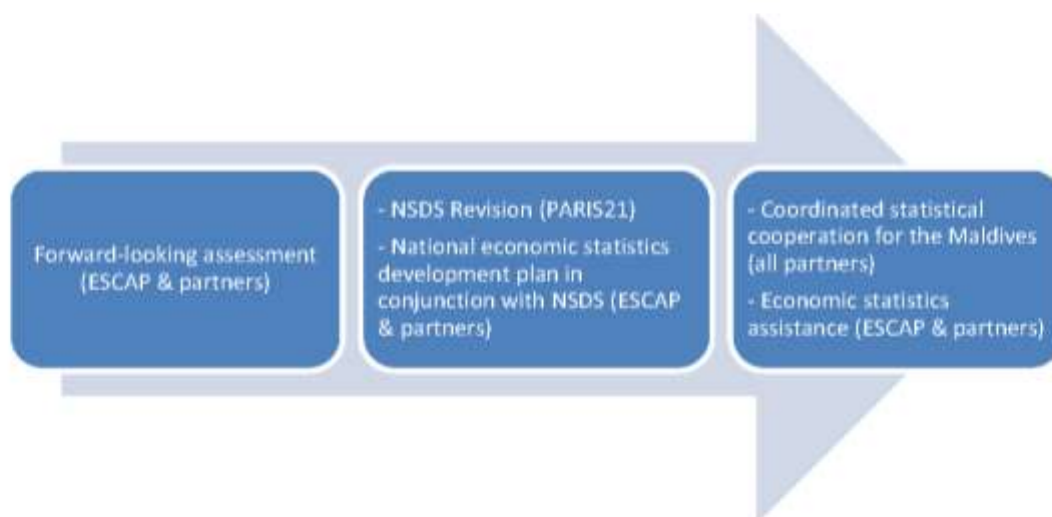
³ For details of the Core Set of Economic Statistics please see <http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/2.E-ESCAP-CST2-4E.pdf>

⁴ Natural resources and environment component of the Core Set will be tackled within ESCAP's ongoing work on environment statistics with the Maldives.

Value-added of a forward-looking review

For the Maldives

- The review will aim to demonstrate the impact of the current practices of the national statistical system, and especially of NBS, on the quantity and the quality of selected official statistics that are produced in the Maldives;
- Although the review does not aim to cover the entire national statistical system and the full scope of official statistics in the Maldives, it will dedicate due attention to institutional building blocks for an official statistical system such as the legislation, the implementation of the fundamental principles of official statistics and other relevant codes of practice, human resources management, standard operating procedures, overall data production and dissemination policies in the country.
- The review will feed into 2 integrated plans; national strategy for the development of statistics (NSDS) and a national economic statistics development plan (NESDP). Through its report and the plans the forward-looking review is expected to contribute to coordinated statistical cooperation for the Maldives and support economic statistics development within RPES and in line with national priorities;
- It is also important to emphasize that the review exercise itself enhances coordination, as it brings all stakeholders together to think about and discuss national statistical production and dissemination in a systematic way.



For the region and beyond

UNSD will coordinate the development of a review tool based on the principles and the substantive scope outlined in this document. The Maldives tool and experience will constitute the basis for a review tool and process that are suitable for small national statistical systems, especially Small Island Developing States, with limited capacity to produce and coordinate official statistics.

The Maldives, as the current Chair of the ESCAP Committee on Statistics, influences the regional agenda for statistics development and its experience with national statistical planning will be of value to all member States.

The review methodology

The review methodology will be adapted from the European Union Peer Reviews⁵ and the related Global Assessments.⁶ Hence, the review will comprise the following stages:

1. Verification and completion of a pre-filled self-assessment questionnaire designed in line with the references listed above by the NBS and other concerned agencies;
2. First mission comprising a group reviewers with the relevant combined expertise and involving a series of meetings with a specified list of stakeholders;
3. Discussion of a draft review report;
4. Second review mission for verification (if needed);
5. Launch of report with policymakers and other stakeholders.

The forward-looking review will provide insights on the quality of selected statistical outputs (with a focus on economic statistics) in relation to the mandate, institutional setting and functioning of the national statistical system. A draft outline for the questionnaire is given in Annex.

The composition of the team⁷

ESCAP, 1-2 staff member(s) (TBD)

Current or former head/senior manager of a national statistical office familiar with SIDS

UNSD, Mr Gabriel Gamez, Interregional Adviser on National Accounts

⁵ For further information on European Peer Reviews please visit <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/quality/peer-reviews>

⁶ For further information Global Assessments please visit <http://www.unec.org/statcoop/ga.html>

⁷ The possibility of establishing a mentoring arrangement for the senior managers of NBS can be explored in the context of the forward-looking review.

In the Maldives, the overall coordinator of the review is Ms Aishath Shahuda, Chief Statistician supported by Ms Ashiyath Shazna, Statistics Development and Coordination. Policy level issues during this review will be coordinated by the Senior Policy Executive of the Ministry of Finance and Treasury Mr Mohamed Zuhair.

Timeline of activities and division of responsibilities

- a. Scoping mission by ESCAP [end-October 2015]
- b. Collection of existing materials on the national statistical system of the Maldives (documentation on the functioning of the NBS, assessment reports, presentations given by official statistics providers, etc.) (NBS to provide to ESCAP) [ongoing]
- c. Adaptation of a review tool/questionnaire for the Maldives (UNSD to lead development in cooperation with partners and NBS) [February-March 2016]
- d. Drafting of information to pre-fill the review questionnaire (ESCAP to draft, NBS to review, verify and complete the information) [end-March 2016]
- e. First review mission (agenda to be prepared by NBS and ESCAP in consultation with the review team; NBS to make all logistical arrangements for substantive meetings) [end-May 2016]
- f. Second review mission (agenda to be prepared by NBS and ESCAP in consultation with the review team; NBS to make all logistical arrangements for substantive meetings) [TBD 2016]
- g. Launch of the Report (agenda to be prepared by NBS and ESCAP in consultation with review team; NBS to make all logistical arrangements for substantive meetings) [TBD 2016]

ANNEX

Contents of the review tool/questionnaire

1. LEGAL SETTING
 - 1.1. Protection of professional independence
 - 1.2. Mandate for data collection
 - 1.3. Census-related legislation
 - 1.4. Other legislation affecting statistics
 - 1.5. Data security and statistical confidentiality
2. NATIONAL SYSTEM OF OFFICIAL STATISTICS (NSOS)
 - 2.1. Structure of the system
 - 2.2. National statistical programming / planning
 - 2.3. System coordination mechanisms
3. NATIONAL BUREAU OF STATISTICS OF THE MALDIVES
 - 3.1. The mission statement of the NBS
 - 3.2. The organization of the NBS and the organizational chart
 - 3.3. Resource management
 - 3.4. Internal and external monitoring of quality and performance
 - 3.5. Dissemination policy of the national statistics system
 - 3.6. Relations with main stakeholders
 - 3.7. International cooperation
4. ECONOMIC STATISTICS PRODUCTION AND DISSEMINATION
 - 4.1. General questions for economic statistics / Data sources / Registers and surveys
 - 4.2. Prices and costs
 - 4.2.1. Consumer price index and other price indexes for the final demand categories, in order to monitor price change in key markets and their impact on different groups in the economy

- 4.2.2. Producer / product price measures sufficient to analyze the causes of price changes and the price links in the product supply chain, e.g. producer price index, commodity price index
- 4.2.3. Average labour costs and earnings
- 4.2.4. Unit labour and wage costs
- 4.2.5. Terms of trade
- 4.2.6. Exchange rates/purchasing power parities (PPPs)
- 4.3. Demand and output
 - 4.3.1. GDP production and expenditure accounts, in current and constant prices, to measure demand and supply
 - 4.3.2. External trade
 - 4.3.3. Short-term industry output measures
 - 4.3.4. Industrial structure statistics
 - 4.3.5. Short term, disaggregated demand statistics (consumer, investment – fixed and inventory)
 - 4.3.6. Productivity measures
- 4.4. Income and wealth
 - 4.4.1. National accounts for the economy, to measure income, savings, investment, accumulation and wealth
 - 4.4.2. National accounts by sector to measure income redistribution, sector income, savings, accumulation, financial investment etc. [minimum sectors: household, government, enterprises]
 - 4.4.3. Balance of payments to measure international income and capital flows
 - 4.4.4. International investment position, to measure the nation's overseas net debt
 - 4.4.5. External debt statistics
 - 4.4.6. Income and wealth distribution statistics
- 4.5. Money and banking
 - 4.5.1. Assets / liabilities of the banking system
 - 4.5.2. Monetary measures
 - 4.5.3. Interest rates
- 4.6. Government

- 4.6.1 Revenue and expenditure, borrowing and lending
- 4.6.2 Government accounts on a SNA and/or GFS basis
- 4.7. Labour market
 - 4.7.1. Labour supply and characteristics of the labour force
 - 4.7.2. Labour/skills demand, employment, unemployment, hours worked, underemployment, employment in the formal/informal sectors
 - 4.7.3. Job creation and vacancies
- 4.8. Multi-domain statistics (to be covered in the scope of economic statistics compilation)
 - 4.8.1. Tourism statistics
 - 4.8.2. Agriculture and fishing statistics

Annex 2:

Second review mission: Programme

Sunday 22 May	Meeting	Participants	Other Agencies
	Planning meeting with NBS	NBS Mr. Mohammed Zuhair - Ministry of Finance & Treasury Ms. Aishath Shahuda - Chief Statistician, NBS Ms. Ashiyath Sharma - Statistician, Statistical Coordination and Standards, NBS Ms. Aishath Hassan - Statistician, National Accounts and Economic Statistics, NBS Ms. Aishath Laila - Statistician, Statistical Surveys & Research, NBS Ms. Mariyam Mirfath - Statistician, Demographics & Social Statistics, NBS Ms. Fathimath Nihani - Statistician, Demographics & Research, NBS Ms. Hana Mansoor - National Accounts and Economic Statistics, NBS Ms. Muhiyiddin Ibrahim - Statistical Coordination and Standards, NBS	
11:00-11:30			
	Meeting with senior official of Ministry of Finance & Treasury (Minister, State Minister, etc)	NBS Mr. Mohammed Zuhair - Ministry of Finance & Treasury Ms. Aishath Shahuda - Chief Statistician, NBS	Mr. Abdulla Jihad - Minister of Finance & Treasury Mr. Mohamed Ashmalee - National Center for Information Technology
11:30-12:00			
	Review structure of NBS	NBS Mr. Mohammed Zuhair - Ministry of Finance & Treasury Ms. Aishath Shahuda - Chief Statistician, NBS Ms. Ashiyath Sharma - Statistician, Statistical Coordination and Standards, NBS Ms. Ashiyath Hassan - Statistician, National Accounts and Economic Statistics, NBS Ms. Aishath Laila - Statistician, Statistical Surveys & Research, NBS Ms. Mariyam Mirfath - Statistician, Demographics & Social Statistics, NBS Ms. Fathimath Nihani - Statistician, Demographics & Research, NBS Ms. Hana Mansoor - National Accounts and Economic Statistics, NBS Ms. Muhiyiddin Ibrahim - Statistical Coordination and Standards, NBS Ms. Thameela Ibrahim - Deputy Director General, Corporate Affairs, NBS Ms. Fathimath Rifaath - Corporate Affairs, NBS	
12:00-1:00			
	Review structure of NBS	NBS Mr. Mohammed Zuhair - Ministry of Finance & Treasury Ms. Aishath Shahuda - Chief Statistician, NBS Ms. Ashiyath Sharma - Statistician, Statistical Coordination and Standards, NBS Ms. Ashiyath Hassan - Statistician, National Accounts and Economic Statistics, NBS Ms. Aishath Laila - Statistician, Statistical Surveys & Research, NBS Ms. Thameela Ibrahim - Deputy Director General, Corporate Affairs, NBS Ms. Fathimath Rifaath - Corporate Affairs, NBS Ms. Mariyam Mirfath - Statistician, Demographics & Social Statistics, NBS Ms. Fathimath Nihani - Statistician, Demographics & Research, NBS Ms. Hana Mansoor - National Accounts and Economic Statistics, NBS Mr. Mohamed Irfan Farooq - Information Technology, NBS Ms. Muhiyiddin Ibrahim - Statistical Coordination and Standards, NBS	Mr. Hussain Shifau - National Center for Information Technology Mr. Ahmed Ahsan Shameem - National Center for Information Technology Ms. Aishath Rasheda - Department of National Registration
1:00-2:00			
Monday 23 May	Meeting		

8:30-9:00	Review statistical legislation	<p>Ms. Rikke Munk Hansen - UNESCAP Mr. Christopher Ryan - UNESCAP Mr. Gabriel Gomez - UNSO Ms. Badamsatseg - Mongolia Statistics Office Mr. Mohammed Zuhair - Ministry of Finance & Treasury Ms. Aishath Shahuda - Chief Statistician, NBS Ms. Ashiyath Shazna - Statistician, Statistical Coordination and Standards, NBS Ms. Aishath Hassan - Statistician, National Accounts and Economic Statistics, NBS Ms. Aishath Laila - Statistician, Statistical Surveys & Research, NBS Ms. Mariyam Mirfath - Statistician, Demographics & Social Statistics, NBS Ms. Fathmath Nihan - Statistical Surveys & Research, NBS Ms. Hana Mansoor - National Accounts and Economic Statistics, NBS</p>	
9:00-9:30	Statistical confidentiality	<p>Mr. Mohammed Zuhair - Ministry of Finance & Treasury Ms. Aishath Shahuda - Chief Statistician, NBS Ms. Ashiyath Shazna - Statistician, Statistical Coordination and Standards, NBS Ms. Aishath Hassan - Statistician, National Accounts and Economic Statistics, NBS Ms. Aishath Laila - Statistician, Statistical Surveys & Research, NBS Ms. Mariyam Mirfath - Statistician, Demographics & Social Statistics, NBS Ms. Fathmath Nihan - Statistical Surveys & Research, NBS Ms. Hana Mansoor - National Accounts and Economic Statistics, NBS</p>	
9:30-10:00	Professional independence	<p>Mr. Mohammed Zuhair - Ministry of Finance & Treasury Ms. Aishath Shahuda - Chief Statistician, NBS Ms. Ashiyath Shazna - Statistician, Statistical Coordination and Standards, NBS Ms. Aishath Hassan - Statistician, National Accounts and Economic Statistics, NBS Ms. Aishath Laila - Statistician, Statistical Surveys & Research, NBS Ms. Mariyam Mirfath - Statistician, Demographics & Social Statistics, NBS Ms. Fathmath Nihan - Statistical Surveys & Research, NBS Ms. Hana Mansoor - National Accounts and Economic Statistics, NBS</p>	
10:00-10:30	Mandate for collection	<p>Mr. Mohammed Zuhair - Ministry of Finance & Treasury Ms. Aishath Shahuda - Chief Statistician, NBS Ms. Ashiyath Shazna - Statistician, Statistical Coordination and Standards, NBS Ms. Aishath Hassan - Statistician, National Accounts and Economic Statistics, NBS Ms. Aishath Laila - Statistician, Statistical Surveys & Research, NBS Ms. Mariyam Mirfath - Statistician, Demographics & Social Statistics, NBS Ms. Fathmath Nihan - Statistical Surveys & Research, NBS Ms. Hana Mansoor - National Accounts and Economic Statistics, NBS</p>	

10:30-12:00	NSS - Statistical planning (multi-year and annual)	<p>Mr. Mohammed Zuhair - Ministry of Finance & Treasury Ms. Aishath Shahuda - Chief Statistician, NBS Ms. Ahiyath Shazna - Statistician, Statistical Coordination and Standards, NBS Ms. Aishath Hassan - Statistician, National Accounts and Economic Statistics, NBS Ms. Aishath Laila - Statistician, Statistical Surveys & Research, NBS Ms. Mariyam Mirfath - Statistician, Demographics & Social Statistics, NBS Ms. Fathimath Nihan - Statistical Surveys & Research, NBS Ms. Hana Mansoor - National Accounts and Economic Statistics, NBS</p>	<p>Ms. Fathimath Raufiya - Ministry of Fisheries & Agriculture Ms. Ms. Moomina Abdulla - Ministry of Health</p>
12:00-1:00	Review Human Resources Management	<p>Mr. Mohammed Zuhair - Ministry of Finance & Treasury Ms. Aishath Shahuda - Chief Statistician, NBS Ms. Ahiyath Shazna - Statistician, Statistical Coordination and Standards, NBS Ms. Aishath Hassan - Statistician, National Accounts and Economic Statistics, NBS Ms. Aishath Laila - Statistician, Statistical Surveys & Research, NBS Ms. Mariyam Mirfath - Statistician, Demographics & Social Statistics, NBS Ms. Fathimath Nihan - Statistical Surveys & Research, NBS Ms. Hana Mansoor - National Accounts and Economic Statistics, NBS Ms. Mushiqa Ibrahim - Deputy Director General, Corporate Affairs, NBS Ms. Fathimath Rifath - Corporate Affairs, NBS</p>	<p>Mr. Hussain Shifau - National Center for Information Technology Mr. Ahmed Ahsan Shameem - National Center for Information Technology Ms. Aishath Rasheeda - Department of National Registration</p>
1:00-2:00	Review IT Infrastructure	<p>Mr. Mohammed Zuhair - Ministry of Finance & Treasury Ms. Aishath Shahuda - Chief Statistician, NBS Ms. Ahiyath Shazna - Statistician, Statistical Coordination and Standards, NBS Ms. Aishath Hassan - Statistician, National Accounts and Economic Statistics, NBS Ms. Aishath Laila - Statistician, Statistical Surveys & Research, NBS Ms. Mariyam Mirfath - Statistician, Demographics & Social Statistics, NBS Ms. Thameela Ibrahim - Deputy Director General, Corporate Affairs, NBS Ms. Fathimath Rifath - Corporate Affairs, NBS Ms. Hana Mansoor - National Accounts and Economic Statistics, NBS Mr. Mohamed Irfan Farooq - Information Technology, NBS Mr. Ali Nizam - Information Technology, NBS Ms. Mushiqa Ibrahim - Statistical Coordination and Standards, NBS</p>	<p>Mr. Hussain Shifau - National Center for Information Technology Mr. Ahmed Ahsan Shameem - National Center for Information Technology Mr. Ibrahim Shaugy - Department of National Registration</p>
Tuesday 24 May	Meeting		
8:00-9:00	Preparations for 2030 Agenda	<p>Mr. Mohammed Zuhair - Ministry of Finance & Treasury Ms. Aishath Shahuda - Chief Statistician, NBS Ms. Ahiyath Shazna - Statistician, Statistical Coordination and Standards, NBS Ms. Aishath Hassan - Statistician, National Accounts and Economic Statistics, NBS Ms. Aishath Laila - Statistician, Statistical Surveys & Research, NBS Ms. Mariyam Mirfath - Statistician, Demographics & Social Statistics, NBS Ms. Fathimath Nihan - Statistical Surveys & Research, NBS Ms. Mushiqa Ibrahim - Statistical Coordination and Standards, NBS</p>	<p>Ms. Aishath Rishmy - Ministry of Health Ms. Moomina Abdulla - Ministry of Health Dr. Aminath Shaifa - Ministry of Fisheries & Agriculture Mr. Ahmed Wizam - Ministry of Environment & Energy Mr. Imad Mohamed - Ministry of Finance & Treasury Ms. Aza - Ministry of Education</p>

9:00-10:00	Plans for investigating new data - Big Data, Geospatial data, etc	<p>Ms. Aishath Shahuda - Chief Statistician, NBS Ms. Ashiyeth Shazna - Statistician, Statistical Coordination and Standards, NBS Ms. Aishath Laila - Statistician, Statistical Surveys & Research, NBS Ms. Mariyam Mirfath - Statistician, Demographics & Social Statistics, NBS Ms. Fathimath Nihan - Statistical Surveys & Research, NBS</p>	<p>Mr. Musthag - Land Survey Authority</p>
10:00-11:00	Coordination authority and mechanisms	<p>Mr. Mohammed Zuhair - Ministry of Finance & Treasury Ms. Aishath Shahuda - Chief Statistician, NBS Ms. Ashiyeth Shazna - Statistician, Statistical Coordination and Standards, NBS Ms. Aishath Hassan - Statistician, National Accounts and Economic Statistics, NBS Ms. Aishath Laila - Statistician, Statistical Surveys & Research, NBS Ms. Mariyam Mirfath - Statistician, Demographics & Social Statistics, NBS Ms. Fathimath Nihan - Statistical Surveys & Research, NBS</p>	
11:00-12:00	Dissemination policy and practices	<p>Mr. Mohammed Zuhair - Ministry of Finance & Treasury Ms. Aishath Shahuda - Chief Statistician, NBS Ms. Ashiyeth Shazna - Statistician, Statistical Coordination and Standards, NBS Ms. Aishath Hassan - Statistician, National Accounts and Economic Statistics, NBS Ms. Aishath Laila - Statistician, Statistical Surveys & Research, NBS Ms. Mariyam Mirfath - Statistician, Demographics & Social Statistics, NBS Ms. Fathimath Nihan - Statistical Surveys & Research, NBS</p>	
12:00-1:00	Relations with stakeholders	<p>Mr. Mohammed Zuhair - Ministry of Finance & Treasury Ms. Aishath Shahuda - Chief Statistician, NBS Ms. Ashiyeth Shazna - Statistician, Statistical Coordination and Standards, NBS Ms. Aishath Hassan - Statistician, National Accounts and Economic Statistics, NBS Ms. Aishath Laila - Statistician, Statistical Surveys & Research, NBS Ms. Mariyam Mirfath - Statistician, Demographics & Social Statistics, NBS Ms. Fathimath Nihan - Statistical Surveys & Research, NBS</p>	<p>Ms. Micra - Maldives National University Ms. Aishath Saad - Ministry of Finance & Treasury Mr. Mohamed Inad - Ministry of Finance & Treasury Ms. Samaha Ali - Ministry of Finance & Treasury Mr. Anwar Khaleel - Ministry of Finance & Treasury Ms. Aunsa Shafiee - Maldives Inland Revenue Authority Mr. Mahmood Riyaz - Maldives Customs Services Mr. Iqbal Ismail - Maldives Customs Services Ms. Shifana Wafeer - Ministry of Fisheries & Agriculture</p>
1:00-2:00	International cooperation	<p>Mr. Mohammed Zuhair - Ministry of Finance & Treasury Ms. Aishath Shahuda - Chief Statistician, NBS Ms. Ashiyeth Shazna - Statistician, Statistical Coordination and Standards, NBS Ms. Aishath Hassan - Statistician, National Accounts and Economic Statistics, NBS Ms. Aishath Laila - Statistician, Statistical Surveys & Research, NBS Ms. Mariyam Mirfath - Statistician, Demographics & Social Statistics, NBS Ms. Fathimath Nihan - Statistical Surveys & Research, NBS</p>	<p>Ms. Shadya Ibrahim - UNFPA</p>
Wednesday 25 May	Meeting	Group 1	

8:00-9:30	Balance of Payments Statistics	Mr. Aishath Hassan - Statistician, National Accounts and Economic Statistics, NBS Ms. Muthifga Ibrahim - Statistical Coordination and Standards, NBS	Mr. Mansoor Zubair - MMA Mr. Mubashir Mohammed - MMA Ms. Mariyam Azmath - MMA
9:30-11:00	Money & Banking Statistics	Ms. Aishath Hassan - Statistician, National Accounts and Economic Statistics, NBS Ms. Muthifga Ibrahim - Statistical Coordination and Standards, NBS	Ms. Mariyam Manil - MMA Ms. Mariyam Azmath - MMA
11:00-12:30	Government Finance Statistics	Ms. Mariyam Manil - MMA Ms. Mariyam Azmath - MMA Ms. Aishath Hassan - Statistician, National Accounts and Economic Statistics, NBS Ms. Muthifga Ibrahim - Statistical Coordination and Standards, NBS	Mr. Adam Badurulla - Ministry of Finance & Treasury
12:30-2:00	Construction & Investment statistics	Ms. Aishath Hassan - Statistician, National Accounts and Economic Statistics, NBS	Mr. Saleem - Ministry of Housing & Infrastructure Mr. Anwar Ali - Ministry of Housing & Infrastructure
Group 2			
8:00-9:30	Data sources - admin data	Mr. Mohammed Zuhair - Ministry of Finance & Treasury Ms. Aishath Shahuda - Chief Statistician, NBS Ms. Aishath Sharma - Statistician, Statistical Coordination and Standards, NBS Ms. Aishath Hassan - Statistician, National Accounts and Economic Statistics, NBS Ms. Aishath Laila - Statistician, Statistical Surveys & Research, NBS Ms. Mariyam Mirfath - Statistician, Demographics & Social Statistics, NBS Ms. Fathimath Nihan - Statistical Surveys & Research, NBS Ms. Fathimath Riyaza, Demographics & Social Statistics, NBS	Ms. Nafha - National Social Protection Agency Mr. Paul - National Social Protection Agency Mr. Ali Saeed - Department of Immigration and Emigration Ms. Aishath Rasheeda - Department of National Registration
9:30-1:00	Data sources - household & economic survey programme	Mr. Mohammed Zuhair - Ministry of Finance & Treasury Ms. Aishath Shahuda - Chief Statistician, NBS Ms. Aishath Sharma - Statistician, Statistical Coordination and Standards, NBS Ms. Aishath Hassan - Statistician, National Accounts and Economic Statistics, NBS Ms. Aishath Laila - Statistician, Statistical Surveys & Research, NBS Ms. Mariyam Mirfath - Statistician, Demographics & Social Statistics, NBS Ms. Fathimath Nihan - Statistical Surveys & Research, NBS Ms. Fathimath Riyaza, Demographics & Social Statistics, NBS	
1:00-2:00	Quality and production processes	Mr. Mohammed Zuhair - Ministry of Finance & Treasury Ms. Aishath Shahuda - Chief Statistician, NBS Ms. Aishath Sharma - Statistician, Statistical Coordination and Standards, NBS Ms. Aishath Hassan - Statistician, National Accounts and Economic Statistics, NBS Ms. Aishath Laila - Statistician, Statistical Surveys & Research, NBS Ms. Mariyam Mirfath - Statistician, Demographics & Social Statistics, NBS Ms. Fathimath Nihan - Statistical Surveys & Research, NBS Ms. Fathimath Riyaza, Demographics & Social Statistics, NBS	
Thursday 26 May			
	Meeting		
Group 1			
8:00-10:00	Foreign Direct Investment, International Investment, External Debt		

10:00-11:30	Short-term statistics (good and services)	<p>Mr. Mohammed Zuhair - Ministry of Finance & Treasury Ms. Aishath Shahuda - Chief Statistician, NBS Ms. Ashiyath Shazna - Statistician, Statistical Coordination and Standards, NBS Ms. Aishath Hassan - Statistician, National Accounts and Economic Statistics, NBS Ms. Aishath Laila - Statistician, Statistical Surveys & Research, NBS Ms. Mariyam Mirfath - Statistician, Demographics & Social Statistics, NBS Ms. Fathmath Nihan - Statistical Surveys & Research, NBS</p>	<p>Mr. Aiman Ibrahim - Maldives Inland Revenue Authority Ms. Auma Shafeeu - Maldives Inland Revenue Authority</p>
11:30-1:00	Structural business statistics (goods and services)	<p>Mr. Mohammed Zuhair - Ministry of Finance & Treasury Ms. Aishath Shahuda - Chief Statistician, NBS Ms. Ashiyath Shazna - Statistician, Statistical Coordination and Standards, NBS Ms. Aishath Hassan - Statistician, National Accounts and Economic Statistics, NBS Ms. Aishath Laila - Statistician, Statistical Surveys & Research, NBS Ms. Mariyam Mirfath - Statistician, Demographics & Social Statistics, NBS Ms. Fathmath Nihan - Statistical Surveys & Research, NBS</p>	<p>Mr. Aiman Ibrahim - Maldives Inland Revenue Authority Ms. Auma Shafeeu - Maldives Inland Revenue Authority</p>
Group 2			
8:00-9:00	Trade Statistics	<p>Ms. Aishath Shahuda - Chief Statistician, NBS Ms. Ashiyath Shazna - Statistician, Statistical Coordination and Standards, NBS Ms. Aishath Hassan - Statistician, National Accounts and Economic Statistics, NBS Ms. Aishath Laila - Statistician, Statistical Surveys & Research, NBS Ms. Mariyam Mirfath - Statistician, Demographics & Social Statistics, NBS</p>	<p>Mr. Mahmood Riyaz - Maldives Customs Services Mr. Iqbal Ismail - Maldives Customs Services</p>
9:00-10:00	National Accounts Statistics	<p>Ms. Aishath Shahuda - Chief Statistician, NBS Ms. Ashiyath Shazna - Statistician, Statistical Coordination and Standards, NBS Ms. Aishath Hassan - Statistician, National Accounts and Economic Statistics, NBS Ms. Aishath Laila - Statistician, Statistical Surveys & Research, NBS Ms. Mariyam Mirfath - Statistician, Demographics & Social Statistics, NBS Ms. Sajida Ahmed - National Accounts and Economic Statistics, NBS Ms. Mariyam Shadeena - National Accounts and Economic Statistics, NBS</p>	
10:00-11:00	Price Statistics		
11:00-12:00	Tourism Statistics	<p>Ms. Aishath Shahuda - Chief Statistician, NBS Ms. Ashiyath Shazna - Statistician, Statistical Coordination and Standards, NBS Ms. Aishath Hassan - Statistician, National Accounts and Economic Statistics, NBS Ms. Aishath Laila - Statistician, Statistical Surveys & Research, NBS</p>	<p>Mr. Hussain Lirar - Ministry of Tourism Ms. Mariyam Sharmela - Ministry of Tourism</p>
12:00 - 01:00	Debrief session with Minister	<p>Ms. Aishath Shahuda - Chief Statistician, NBS</p>	<p>Mr. Abdulla Jilhad - Minister of Finance & Treasury Mr. Mohamed Ahmalee - National Center for Information Technology</p>
01:00 - 02:00	Debrief session	<p>Ms. Ashiyath Shazna - Statistician, Statistical Coordination and Standards, NBS Ms. Aishath Hassan - Statistician, National Accounts and Economic Statistics, NBS Ms. Aishath Laila - Statistician, Statistical Surveys & Research, NBS Ms. Mariyam Mirfath - Statistician, Demographics & Social Statistics, NBS</p>	

Annex 3:

Statistics Regulation of the Maldives 2012

Unofficial Translation

1

STATISTICS REGULATION OF THE MALDIVES 2012

PART I

PRELIMINARY

1) INTRODUCTION

1. This Regulation governs all matters relating to the collection, compilation, dissemination and use of statistical data, by setting the procedures to be adopted, for the establishment of an effective statistical system in the Maldives.

2) OBJECTIVES

1. Development of the National Statistical System of Maldives, to enable the provision of relevant statistics about the economic and social situation of the country, on an impartial basis to honor citizens' entitlement to public information.
2. Provide reliable statistics required for government policy making and monitoring the achievement of the of the desired results, to enable the required policy changes, in a timely manner
3. Promote awareness and knowledge on the use of statistics among the citizens to enable proper use of statistics in decision making
4. Improve the reliability of national statistics by emphasizing the responsibility of citizens in providing accurate information to national statistical agencies of the government in censuses and surveys
5. Enhance the usage of administrative data maintained by the government agencies for statistical purposes
6. Ensure the adherence to the fundamental principles of official statistics, including scientific principles and professional ethics, on the methods and procedures for the collection, processing, storage and presentation of statistical data.
7. Ensure that individual data collected by the statistical agencies for statistical compilations are kept strictly confidential and used exclusively for statistical purposes, to gain trust of data providers and retain trust in official statistics,

8. Improve coordination among statistical agencies within the country to attain consistency and efficiency in the statistical system to achieve cost reduction and improvements in the quality and timeliness of statistics
9. Compile and disseminate reliable data to meet international data requirements of the nation, improve the extent that national statistics meet the international standards and increase the usage of statistics.
10. Enhance national, bilateral and multilateral cooperation activities in statistics to support the development of the national statistical system.

3) FUNCTIONS OF LEAD AGENCY FOR STATISTICS

1. The Lead Agency for Statistics shall be the principal data collecting and disseminating agency responsible for co-ordinating, monitoring and supervising the National Statistical System to cover matters specified in the third Schedule to this Act.
2. The Lead Agency for Statistics shall be responsible for the major statistical operations listed below;
 - Conduct Population and Housing census and collect, compile and publish national statistics required for the development of the country;
 - Maintain information required for monitoring the Poverty and vulnerability
 - Collect, compile and publish national accounts statistics and statistics required for monitoring the country's economic development.
 - Develop and implement the statistical survey regulations, approve statistical surveys conducted by -government agencies targeted to the public and - maintain a register of such surveys at the national level.
 - Setting national policies related to statistical activities , compile and publish statistical regulations and coordinate the national statistical system.
3. The Lead Agency for Statistics shall be responsible to follow the below tasks in performing the activities in 1 & 2 ;
 - To provide quality statistics within a decentralised system
 - Set procedures and standards to be followed in the collection, compilation and publication of statistics to ensure adherence to common standards and methods required to maintain data quality at national level
 - Provide guidance, and assistance to users and -producers of statistics;
 - Promote co-operation, co-ordination and rationalization among users and providers of statistics at national and local levels so as to avoid duplication of effort and ensure optimal utilization of scarce resource

- Coordinate and co-operate and act as a focal point for users and producers of statistics at national and international levels.
 - The Lead Agency for Statistics shall act as the key statistical agency responsible for providing official statistics
4. In performing any activity stated in 2 of this section, in case any other agency responsible for a particular area of statistics is unable to collect and compile the required statistics, the Lead Agency for Statistics has the authority to place staff of the Lead Agency for Statistics at the agency or provide the required assistance to collect and compile the required statistics. And if the task could still not be completed, the Lead Agency for Statistics has the power to transfer the work directly to the Lead Agency for Statistics.
5. The Lead Agency for Statistics shall be responsible for any other tasks to fulfill the objectives stated in this act.

4) STRUCTURE OF THE MALDIVES STATISTICAL SYSTEM

1. Base on the structure of the statistics system of the Maldives, the Lead Agency for Statistics will be the Statistics Division under the Department of National Planning. Lead Agency for Statistics shall be a professionally independent body and shall not be influenced in implementing its activities.
2. Other government agencies will generate official statistics required for their respective agencies through censuses and surveys and through administrative records. In this regard the respective agencies shall be responsible for collection and compilation of statistics stated in the third schedule of this regulation. Agencies within the National Statistical System will be responsible for the collection and compilation of the areas of official statistics listed in the third schedule of this regulation.
3. Joint statistics collection activities by more than one agency within the national statistical system, with or without the participation of the key statistics agency, shall be properly coordinated and data shared amongst the relevant agencies as per the agrees upon procedures. In such joint statistics collection exercises, the agency responsible for the activity shall inform the purpose and use of the data collected, to the data provider, in writing.
4. The Lead Agency for Statistics is responsible to coordinate amongst the agencies within the national statistical system, and support the collection and compilation of the basic statistics that are deemed as crucial for the nation.

5. All agencies responsible for the collection and compilation of official statistics to be collected within the national statistical system, shall establish a mechanism for collection and compilation of statistics required from their respective areas and establish statistical units and assign statistical staff for these units.
6. All Officers of the Lead Agency for Statistics and officers assigned to the statistical units established at the stakeholder agencies shall take the oath under the second schedule of this regulation, and be signed.

PART II

DATA COLLECTION, COMPILATION, PUBLICATION AND USE

5) FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF OFFICIAL STATISTICS

1. Statistical activities in the country shall carried out be in accordance with the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, states in fourth schedule of this regulation, shall develop the statistical system so as to, provide reliable information, improve quality, maintain confidentiality, provide information under the international standards to fit the scientific procedures, maintain coordination within other government and international agencies to minimize costs.
2. In addition, Statistical activities shall be geared toward the achievement of the main objectives stated below;
 1. To provide statistics on the economic, demographic, social and environmental situation of the country for policy making and monitoring the achievement of desired results and to cater for such information needs of citizen's, in a democratic society.
 2. Work towards establishing and sustaining an efficient and effective statistical system.
 3. Increase the awareness of the importance and use of of statistics among the general public.
 4. Support the development of technology , principles and methods adopted in the implementation of statistical activities
 5. Promote statistics to increase the usage of statistics by the private sector, NGOs, students and researchers.

6. Promote new areas of research and analysis as additional mechanisms, outside of the government official statistics system, for getting quality statistics, required for assessing national development

6) COLLECTION OF STATISTICS

1. Statistics can be obtained in the Maldives through censuses, surveys and administrative records or any other means acceptable by the Lead Agency for Statistics.
2. Data collection shall be done in accordance with the UN fundamental principles of official statistics given in the fourth schedule of this regulation.
3. Data collection shall be done in such a way to minimize the response burden of the citizens.
4. The designated enumerator or staff shall collect data from respondents in one of the following ways;
 1. Data collection through a personal interview
 2. Data collection through a designed questionnaire, sent through post, email or other telegraphic medium, informing respondents their obligation to complete the questionnaire and the means and deadlines for submission of completed forms
5. If in a formal manner a request for information is sent by an officer, unless otherwise specified, the data should be delivered by the respondent under this regulation.
6. A designated enumerator or statistical officer with the approval of the Lead Agency for Statistics in writing for data collection shall obtain information by entering to establishments, buildings, vehicles, vessels and air planes.
7. If a designated enumerator or statistical officer is restricted from entering to a premise the Lead agency has the right to obtain a court order and shall obtain information by entering to the premise.

7) PERMISSION FOR COLLECTION OF STATISTICS

1. Censuses and surveys, carried out for obtaining designated statistics included in the list of national statistical indicators shall be undertaken by Lead Agency for Statistics or any institution that is designated by Lead Agency for Statistics.
2. Quantitative surveys, qualitative surveys, conducted for the collection of government administrative use shall be carried out with permission from Lead Agency for Statistics. If the surveys required to be undertaken is to be carried out in the Atolls and/or Male', advice shall be obtained from the relevant agencies prior to application for approval of

survey. In addition, if the survey is related to any specific field, advice shall be obtained from the concerned government authority. If the survey requires a pre-test, permission shall be obtained from Lead Agency for Statistics.

3. Collection of statistical data does not include administrative data collection, qualitative surveys that are conducted in relation to research studies and surveys conducted during training.
4. All parties requiring survey approval shall submit the completed survey or pre-test approval form with the documents stated therein to Lead Agency of Statistics.
5. Further to no. 2 of this clause, surveys shall be carried out in accordance with the date and information in the documents approved by Lead Agency of Statistics. Any changes shall be submitted to Lead Agency of Statistics in writing for permission.
6. All persons engaged in data collection shall hold an official document from the concerned government authority, authorizing them to undertake the data collection operation. Such a document shall be presented to the respondent at the time of data collection, if required.

8) PERMISSION FOR STATISTICAL SURVEYS

1. The authorization to conduct surveys shall be given by Lead Agency of Statistics. The request for approval shall be submitted using the survey or pre-test approval form issued by Lead Agency of Statistics.
2. Apart from the data collection for administrative use by the government and other public agencies, do not require approval under this regulation.
3. A full application for approval must be submitted to Lead Agency of Statistics, 4 (four) weeks prior to the commencement of the survey.
4. Permission shall be given within 1 (one) week of the submission of the completed survey or pre-test approval form.
5. Permission as per above 4, shall be given only to those who submit the document stated in above 7(4)
6. Surveys approved under this shall be publicly informed 1 week prior to the survey date.

9) STATISTICS COLLECTION PROCEDURE

1. **CENSUS PROCEDURE:** Census is a statistical data collection operation carried out as a complete enumeration and gathering of related statistics. A census commonly refers to the complete enumeration of the local population at a given time.

- I. Population and housing census in the Maldives shall be conducted every ten yearly.
 2. Population and housing census of the Maldives is conducted in accordance with the internationally recommended principles of census taking. One such principle refers to defacto enumeration. The other principle is dejure enumeration.
 3. All other censuses shall be carried out under generally established international principles.
 4. Census information shall be collected using a structured questionnaire specifically designed for that census.
 5. Census information shall be collected in the Maldives, either in Dhivehi or the English language.
2. **SURVEY PROCEDURE:** A survey is a data collection operation carried out using a representative sample of the population.
- I. Statistical surveys shall be conducted in accordance with the international standards and procedures.
 - II. A survey shall be conducted through direct or telephone interviews with the respondent or through mail-out questionnaires or by observation.
 - III. Generally information on a survey shall be in Dhivehi or the English language. However, a survey may be conducted in any other language with the approval of the Lead Agency for Statistics.
3. To differentiate the Census of Population and housing with other census, the details of such censuses shall be provided.

10) COMPILATION AND USE OF STATISTICAL DATA

1. The information obtained from the data collection operation requires a standardized coding system or classification. All such coding shall be carried out using standard international classifications or any such classification developed in compliance with international or national standards. Newly developed coding systems or classifications require being acceptable to the Lead Agency for Statistics.
2. The information obtained in accordance with this regulation shall be used mainly to fulfill the stated objectives. Provision for further research shall be allowed on the data collected.

3. The information identified, as designated statistics shall only be published with the permission from the Lead Agency for Statistics.
4. Data collected for administrative use by other agencies shall be accessed by the request of the Lead Agency for Statistics. Accordingly, the financial statements collected by the Ministry of Economic development, tax payers information collected by the Maldives Inland Revenue Authority, records collected by the Maldives Pension Administration Office, Civil registration data maintained by the Department of National Registration and other administrative records for statistical use maintained by agencies, unless otherwise differently stated in another act shall be provided to the Lead Agency for Statistics.

PART III

PUBLISHING AND MAINTAINING CONFIDENTIALITY OF STATISTICAL DATA

11) PUBLISHING AND MAINTAINING CONFIDENTIALITY OF STATISTICAL DATA

1. The statistical information obtained from the data collection operation shall be published as aggregated totals, in accordance with the principles of statistical compilation.
2. Information obtained shall not be disclosed or published in a manner that will disclose the identity of the provider.
3. Confidentiality must be accorded to any information that is obtained from permitted data collection operations, which would disclose the identity of the provider.
4. Any information collected under this regulation shall not be disclosed to any unauthorized party except in accordance with clauses 1 and 2 of this clause.
5. Unless otherwise for a charge under this act;
 - a. Information provided for the use under this regulation;
 - b. An answer provided to a question under this regulation;
 - c. A report containing information on an individual, business entity, economic activity provided as an answer to a question under this regulation;
 - d. Information containing information on an individual, business entity, economic activity processed to computer, or any electronic media;

shall not be published or used without the approval from the high authority of the particular entity/activity as evidence by an employee/person assigned under this regulation.

6. If anyone publishes or publicize the information stated in above 5. Of this act on their own will be excluded from the above 5. Of this clause.
7. If any information included in a reports or in a summary of a report directly disclose information about a particular person/entity/activity's production, capital, or the profits because of the particular person/entity/activity is the only one active in the activity shall be published under this regulation.
8. Prior to publishing/disclosing statistics collected under this act, Lead Agency for Statistics chief shall assure that the data collected is in accordance to the procedures and shall be reviewed prior to publishing for reliability, confidentiality and if information has taken in accordance with the standards and procedures.
9. Lead Agency for Statistics shall play a key role to form a network and facilitate other sectors to implement and work according to the standards and procedures of this act.
10. All key sectors are responsible to support the Lead Agency for Statistics in their work.

12) ROLES OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC

1. Any person, who is permitted under this act to conduct statistical data collection for official use of the government, shall be provided with true information, within a given time as may be required.
2. Any party, permitted by the Lead Agency for Statistics for data collection in relation to national development shall be provided with the required information.
3. Any party, permitted by the Lead Agency for Statistics for data collection in relation to research and/or training shall be provided with the required information.
4. The work of any person permitted to carry out a data collection operation under this regulation shall not be hindered or obstructed
5. The respondent must ask for evidence of permission accorded under this regulation before giving information. The information provided to persons who do not possess any evidence of such a permit shall not be protected under this regulation.

PART IV

OFFENCES UNDER THE REGULATION

13) OFFENCES

1. The Lead Agency for Statistics of Maldives has the discretionary power to take the following actions against any person who contravenes this regulation.
 - a. Intervene in any activity that violates this regulation and desist the operation, until the action is rectified
 - b. Revoke the permit for data collection and publication for a definite period. The period will be determined by the Ministry of Planning and National Development
 - c. Levy a fine between Rf. 10,000/- (Rufiyaa Ten Thousand) to Rf. 100,000/- (Rufiyaa One Hundred Thousand), depending on the seriousness of the action.
 - d. File a court case
2. If any employee/person designated by this act, perform any of the following shall be an offence. The charges will be a fine between Rf. 1,000/- (One Ten Thousand) to Rf 60,000/- (Rufiyaa Sixty Thousand).
 - a. Use of Information obtained on the job for his/her own benefit
 - b. Disclose the Information obtained on the job without authorization or to a irrelevant party/entity.
 - c. Statistics collection with the intention to disclose it to a person or
 - d. If anyone discloses or publishes any information knowing that the information is being collected against this regulation.
3. If anyone perform any of the following shall be an offence. The charges will be a fine between Rf. 5,000/- (Five Ten Thousand) to Rf 30,000 (Rufiyaa Thirty Thousand).
 - a. The work of any person permitted under this act to carry out a data collection operation under this regulation be hindered or obstructed or;
 - b. Refuse or neglect any of the following:
 - i. Any form or any written document to be filled and forwarded shall be sent within the deadline
 - ii. Provide information/answer to any questions made under this regulation
 - c. Refuse or neglect to provide information to any form or any written document or provide false information is an offence.

PART V

COORDINATING NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN ORDER TO STRENGTHEN THE NATIONAL STATISTICS SYSTEM

14) COORDINATING AND STRENGTHENING THE STATISTICAL SYSTEM

1. Lead Agency for Statistics shall be responsible for policy planning of statistics, ensure coordination between co sectors responsible for collecting and compiling statistical data.
2. A statistics Coordinating committee shall be formed to in order to fulfill the tasks mentioned in (1)
3. Furthermore, a close relation with International and other countries Statistics Organizations shall be maintained and Lead Agency for Statistics shall be responsible to this task

15) FORMATION AND MAINTAINING A NATIONAL STATISTICAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE

- 1- National Statistics Coordinating Committee shall be the leading committee as a key body to oversee the work of Lead Agency for Statistics and other tasks under the decentralized statistical systems.
- 2- Members of the committee shall comprise members from all agencies in the National Statistical System.
- 3- The roles and responsibilities of the committee shall include:
 - a. Provide information for GDP Production and other social and economic Indicators
 - b. Be the platform to discuss and produce reliable figures
 - c. Working for the development of statistics system
 - d. Advise and provide sector related feedback for censuses and surveys
 - e. Participate and assist in publish and disseminating statistics in a timely manner

16) EFFECTIVE DATE

This regulation will be in effect from the date which the president endorses and is being gazetted.

APPENDIX

1. Interpretation
2. Oath
3. Official statistics to be collected within the National Statistical System
4. Fundamental Principles of Statistics

Interpretation

- a. "Census" means a statistical operation in which all units (whole population) of interest are enumerated;
- b. "National Statistics system" includes all agencies in the Maldives whether Government or not responsible, whether under any enactment or otherwise for gathering statistical data directly through surveys or through administrative action;
- c. "Statistical Sample Survey" means a statistical operation in which only a selected part (sample) and not all units (whole population) of interest are enumerated; "currency point" means the value specified in relation to currency point in the First Schedule to this Act;
- d. "Statistics" means any quantity collected as a summary of data
- e. "Administrative Statistics" means data collected under a regulation or Act of Parliament through administrative means.
- f. "Designated Statistics" means Statistics identified and publicly announced by the Lead agency for Statistics which is identified to be generated which are the most critical and essential statistics required for social and economic policy planning, monitoring and evaluation.
- g. "Sectoral Statistics" means data collected by the relevant sectoral agencies to facilitate the policy and planning decisions.

Oath

I,do solemnly swear that I will faithfully and honestly fulfil my duties asin conformity with the requirement of the Maldives Lead Agency for Statistics of Statistics Act, and shall not without authority, reveal any information acquired by virtue of my duties, nor, until such information is made public directly or indirectly use it for personal gain.

Official statistics to be collected within the National Statistical System

1. Population
2. Housing
3. Births and Deaths
4. Migration
5. Foreign trade
6. Agriculture
7. Land rent, land use
8. Forestry,
9. Fisheries
10. Mining and quarrying
11. Manufacturing
12. Energy
13. Distributive Trade
14. Banking, Insurance and other financial intermediaries
15. Transport and communication
16. Business and professional services
17. Social, sports/recreational and personal services
18. Civil services

19. Social welfare
20. Education
21. Laborers, Employment agreements, accidents and compensation
22. Health
23. Employment
24. Wages and salaries
25. Income, Earnings, profits and interest
26. Household income and expenditure
27. Savings
28. Capital investments
29. Manufactured products and stock
30. Wholesale and retail sales
31. Grants and BOP
32. Tourism
33. Environment
34. NGOs
35. Business registration
36. Civil registration

Fundamental Principles of Official Statistic:

Principle 1.

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 honor citizens' entitlement to public information.

Principle 2.

To retain trust in official statistics, the statistical agencies need 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.

Principle 3.

To facilitate a correct interpretation of the data, the statistical agencies are to present information according to scientific standards on the sources, methods and procedures of the statistics.

Principle 4.

The statistical agencies are entitled to comment on erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics.

Principle 5.

Data for statistical purposes may be drawn from all types of sources, be they statistical surveys or administrative records. Statistical agencies are to choose the source with regard to quality, timeliness, costs and the burden on respondents.

Principle 6.

Individual data collected by statistical agencies for statistical compilation, whether they refer to natural or legal persons, are to be strictly confidential and used exclusively for statistical purposes.

Principle 7.

The laws, regulations and measures under which the statistical systems operate are to be made public.

Principle 8.

Coordination among statistical agencies within countries is essential to achieve consistency and efficiency in the statistical system.

Principle 9.

The use by statistical agencies in each country of international concepts, classifications and methods promotes the consistency and efficiency of statistical systems at all official levels.

Principle 10.

Bilateral and multilateral cooperation in statistics contributes to the improvement of systems of official statistics in all countries.

Annex 4:

National Statistical Coordinating Committee – Member 2015

National Statistical Coordinating Committee - Members 2015

	Office	Member	Designation
1	Communication Authority of Maldives	Zulaikha Ibrahim	Deputy Director
2	Department of Judicial Administration	Suhad Adam	Senior Statistical Officer
3	Maldives Civil Aviation Authority		
4	Maldives Customs Service	Khadeeja Mohamed	Deputy Chief Supretendent
5	Maldives Inland Revenue Authority	Asma Shafeeu	Director, Technical & Planning
6	Maldives Monetary Authority (MMA)	Mariyam Azmath	Senior Analyst
7	Maldives Police Service	Ahmed Rashwan	Chief Inspector of Police
8	Ministry of Economic Development	Saeeda Umar	EIF Coordinator
9	Ministry of Education	Yoosuf Ahmed	Director
10	Ministry of Environment and Energy	Nihama Hassan	Assistant Director
11	Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture	Hussain Sinan	Director
12	Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture	Raufiyya Abdulla	Senior Statistical Officer
13	Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture	Rifa'ath Hassan	Assistant Director
14	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Dr. Hussain Niyaaz	Additional Secretary
15	Ministry of Health	Ms. Samiya	Director
16	Ministry of Home Affairs	Mr. Shareef	Director
17	Ministry of Housing and Infrastructure		
18	Ministry of Law and Gender		
19	Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture	Mariyam Sharmeela	Director
21	Ministry of Youth and Sports	Zubaida Abdul Hameed	Deputy Director
22	Department of Immigration & Immigration	Ali Saeed	Chief Supretendent
23	Transport Authority of Maldives	Hassan Shareef	Deputy Director General
24	Local Government Authority	Imad Mohamed	Senior Planning Officer
25	Ministry of Finance and Treasury		
26	Department of National Registration	Aishath Rasheeda	Senior Computer Programmer
27	National Centre for Information Technology	Hussain Shifau	IT Executive
28	National Centre for Information Technology	Ahmed Haleem	IT Manager
29	National Bureau of Statistics	Aishath Shahuda	Chief Statistician
30	National Bureau of Statistics	Ashiyath Shazna	Assistant Statistician
31	National Bureau of Statistics	Fathmath Nihan	Assistant System Programmer
32	National Bureau of Statistics	Fathmath Riyaza	Assistant Statistician
31	National Bureau of Statistics	Aishath Hassan	Assistant Statistician
Revised 04th April 2016			

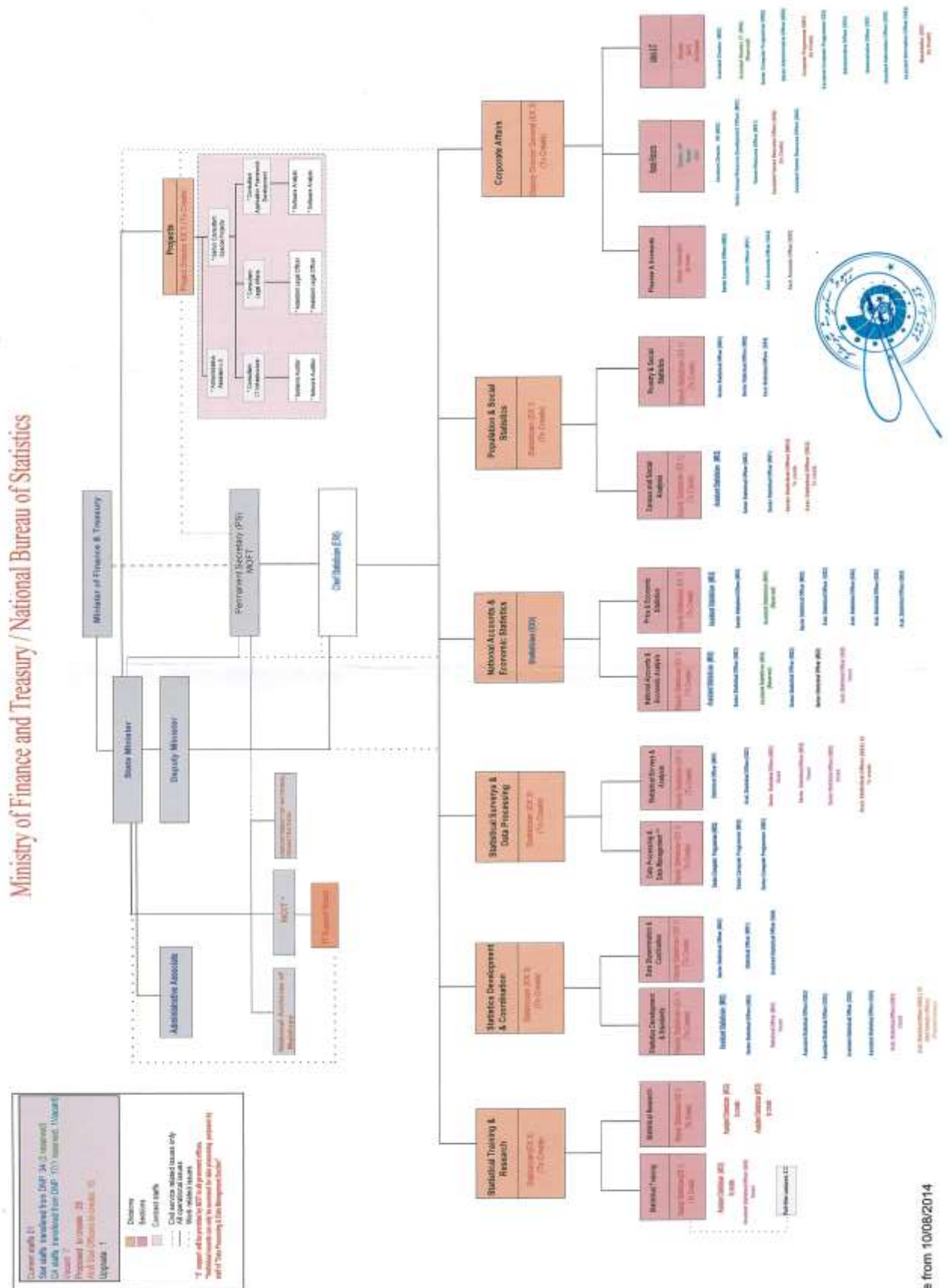
Annex 5:

Members of the National Statistical System of the Maldives

	Designated agency ¹⁵	Institutional arrangement for statistical activities
1	Communication Authority of the Maldives	
2	Department of Judicial Administration	
3	Department of Immigration and Emigration	
4	Local Government Authority	
5	Maldives Civil Aviation Authority	
6	Maldives Customs Service	Has a Statistics Section with 5 staff working full-time on statistics
7	Maldives Inland Revenue Authority	Has a statistics division
8	Maldives Monetary Authority	Has a Research and Statistics Division Statistics is mentioned in the law governing the activities of the Authority
9	Maldives Police Services	
10	Ministry of Economic Development	
11	Ministry of Education	Has a Section on Data and Policy Analysis, with 2-3 staff dedicated to statistical work
12	Ministry of Environment and Energy	
13	Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture	Has a Policy and planning Unit with 4 staff dedicated to statistical work on fisheries and 2 statistical staff dedicated to agriculture
14	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	
15	Ministry of Health	Has a Planning and Monitoring Section with 1-2 staff dedicated to statistical work
16	Ministry of Home Affairs	
17	Ministry of Housing and Infrastructure	
18	Ministry of Law and Gender	
19	Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture	“Regulation on Collection of Data for the Compilation of Tourism Statistics” [2011] governs the statistical activities of the ministry
20	Ministry of Youth and Sports	No established organizational unit but has 1-2 staff dedicated to statistical work
21	Transport Authority of the Maldives	
22	Ministry of Finance and Treasury, including: - Statistics Division (NSO)	NSO: The central statistical authority of the Maldives and the coordinator of the NSS
	- Department of National Registration (an administrative data producer)	DNR: An administrative data producer
	- National Centre for Information Technology (an administrative data holder)	NCIT: An administrative data holder

¹⁵ The listed agencies mirror the NSCC member list as of April 2016; this list differs from the 2013 designation overview issued by the NSO.

Organization structure within NBS



Effective from 10/08/2014

Annex 7:

Designation of Statistical Activities

Working Document

May 1, 2013
Designated Statistics

Designation of Statistical Activities That Will Generate Critical Data for Decision-Making of the Government

As per the Statistical Regulation of the Maldives (regulation no: 2013/R-4), approved and gazette by the President's Office on 17 January 2013, currently under implementation, Statistics Division of the Department of National Planning has to identify and publicly announce designated statistics.

Designated statistics are those statistics and statistical activities that will generate critical data for the social and economic development of the country. Statistics that is critical to be made available for the formulation of government policies decision-making and monitoring and for the monitoring of internationally agreed indicators.

On May 1, 2013 the Statistics Division of the Department of National Planning approved the following activities and statistics that have been designated for adoption by the relevant government agencies. The activities and statistics that have been designated as per ANNEX of this document shall be adopted by the government as the means of generating the critical and essential data for administrators, planners and policy-makers in the government and private sectors.

The system of designated statistics is a dynamic process that allows for updating to keep attuned to the emerging demands of data users. In this regard, the SD/DNP is authorized under to modify (add/delete) these based on its evaluation and monitoring, in accordance with basic statistical standards and in consultation with National Statistical Coordinating Committee and data producers and users.

The implementing agencies shall provide the SD/DNP results of said censuses, surveys and administrative-based reports on a regular basis and ensure the dissemination of the data to the general public in accordance with the designated time frame.

The implementing agencies shall be responsible in carrying out the improvements in the design and methodology of said activities in coordination with the SD/DNP. The quality of these designated statistics needs to be continuously improved to address the needs of data users.

Any immediate requirement to implement this shall be subject to the usual budgetary rules and regulations.

This implementation of these activities and provision of designated statistics shall take effect immediately.

(signed)

Head

Statistics Division

Department of National Planning

ANNEX:1

List of Designated Statistical Activities

Tourism

Foreign Trade

Money and Banking

Education

National Accounts and Balance of Payments

Labor and Employment

Vital, Health and Nutrition Statistics

Population and Housing

Businesses, Industry/economic activity

Fisheries and Agriculture

Income and Prices

Environment, Energy and Water Resources

Public Administration, Government Finance and External Debt

Transport and Communication

Foreign Investment Statistics

Justice and Crime Statistics

Tourism

Activity	Agency	Frequency of conduct	Geographic Disaggregation	Schedule of data Dissemination
Processing of Arrival / Departure Cards	Department of Immigration and Emigration/Ministry of Tourism	Monthly, Annual	National	Monthly - five (5) weeks after the reference month Annual -two (2) months after reference year
Compilation of Key tourism Indicators	Ministry of Tourism	Monthly, Annual	National	Monthly - five (5) weeks after the reference month Annual -two (2) months after reference year

Foreign Trade

Activity	Agency	Frequency of conduct	Geographic Disaggregation	Schedule of data Dissemination
Generation of Foreign Trade Statistics	Maldives Customs Service	Monthly, Annual	national	Monthly - 45 days after the reference month Annual - three (3) months after the reference year

Money and Banking

Activity	Agency	Frequency of conduct	Geographic Disaggregation	Schedule of data Dissemination
Generation of Money and Banking Statistics	Maldives Monetary Authority	annual	national	Annual - three (3) months after the reference year

Education

Activity	Agency	Frequency of conduct	Geographic Disaggregation	Schedule of data Dissemination
Functional Literacy, Education and Mass Media Survey	National Statistics Office (NSO)	every 5 years	national, regional, provincial	One (1) year after the reference year
Generation of Basic Education Statistics	Department of Education	annual	national, regional, Atoll, Island	One (1) year after the reference year
Literacy Rate	NSO	every 5 years,	national, regional, Atoll, Island	One (1) year after the reference year
	NSO	every 10 years, CPH		18 months after the reference year

National Accounts and Balance of Payments

Activity	Agency	Frequency of conduct	Geographic Disaggregation	Schedule of data Dissemination
Functional Literacy, Education and Mass Media Survey	National Statistics Office (NSO)	every 5 years	national, regional, provincial	One (1) year after the reference year
Generation of Basic Education Statistics	Department of Education	annual	national, regional, Atoll, Island	One (1) year after the reference year
Literacy Rate	NSO	every 5 years,	national, regional, Atoll, Island	One (1) year after the reference year
	NSO	every 10 years, CPH		18 months after the reference year

Labor and Employment

Activity	Agency	Frequency of conduct	Geographic Disaggregation	Schedule of data Dissemination
Household Income and Expenditure Survey 1	Department of National Planning/Statistics Division	every five (5) years;	national, Male', Atolls	One year after the reference year
Generation of Statistics on Expatriate Workers	Department of Immigration and Emigration/Ministry of Human Resources Youth and Sports	monthly, annual	national	Monthly - 45 days after the reference month Annual - three (3) months after the reference year
Generation of Statistics on employees in pension scheme	Department of Immigration and Maldives Pension Administration Office	monthly, annual	national	Monthly - 45 days after the reference month Annual - three (3) months after the reference year
Generation of Statistics on employment in tourist resorts	Ministry of Tourism	annual	National, Atolls	Annual - three (3) months after the reference year
Generation of Statistics on employment in corporate sector	Ministry of Economic Development	annual	National, Atolls	Annual - three (3) months after the reference year
Generation of Statistics on government employees	Civil Service Commission of the Maldives	annual	National, Male', Atolls	Annual - three (3) months after the reference year

To include a Labour Force module in the Survey

Vital, Health and Nutrition Statistics

Activity	Agency	Frequency of conduct	Geographic Disaggregation	Schedule of data Dissemination
Generation of Vital Statistics from the Civil Registration System	Department of National Registration/Ministry of Health	monthly	national, islands	Three (3) months after the reference year
Key Health Indicators:	Ministry of Health	annual	national, Male', Atolls	Three (3) months after the reference year
– Infant Mortality Rate				
– Under-5 Mortality Rate				
– Maternal Mortality Rate				
– Still Birth Rate				
– Crude Birth and Death rate				
– Population per hospital bed				
– Population per practicing doctor/staff nurse				
– Immunization coverage				
Demographic Health Survey	Ministry of Health	every 5 years	national, Male', Atolls	One (1) year after the reference year

Population and Housing

Activity	Agency	Frequency of conduct	Geographic Disaggregation	Schedule of data Dissemination
Census of Population and Housing	Department of National Planning/Statistics Division	every 5 or 10 years	national, island	One (1) week after the reference year (preliminary) One (1) year after the reference year (final)
Population Projections	Department of National Planning/Statistics Division	after every census year	national,	One (1) year after the release of final population figures

Statistical Population Register	Department of National Planning/Statistics Division	annual	national,	One (1) year after the release of final population figures
Statistical Housing Register	Department of National Planning/Statistics Division	annual	national,	One (1) year after the release of final population figures

Businesses, Industry/economic activity

Activity	Agency	Frequency of conduct	Geographic Disaggregation	Schedule of data Dissemination
Economic Survey	Department of National Planning/Statistics Division	every 5 years	national, Male', Atolls	One(1) years after the reference year
Statistical Business register	Department of National Planning/Statistics Division	annual	national, island,	Two (2) months after the reference year
Generation of Construction Statistics from Building Permit Forms	NSO	monthly	national, regional, provincial, municipal	1 quarter after the reference quarter

Formerly Annual Survey of Establishments.

Fisheries and Agriculture

Activity	Agency	Frequency of conduct	Geographic Disaggregation	Schedule of data Dissemination
Fish catch	Ministry of fisheries and Agriculture	Monthly, annual	national, Atolls	Monthly - 45 days after the reference month Annual - three (3) months after the reference year
Agricultural production	Ministry of fisheries and Agriculture	annual	national, Atolls	One (1) year after the reference year

Income and Prices

Activity	Agency	Frequency of conduct	Geographic Disaggregation	Schedule of data Dissemination
Household Income and Expenditures Survey	Department of National Planning/Statistics Division	every 5 years	national, Male', Atolls	One (1) year after the reference year
Poverty Thresholds/	Department of National	every 5 years	national, Male', Atolls	One (1) year after the reference year

Incidence	Planning/Statistics Division			
Consumer Price Index	Department of National Planning/Statistics Division	monthly	national, Male', Atolls	30 days after the reference month (last Monday of every month)
Producer Price Index	Department of National Planning/Statistics Division	6 monthly (Bi-annual)	National	30 days after the reference month

Environment, Energy and Water Resources

Activity	Agency	Frequency of conduct	Geographic Disaggregation	Schedule of data Dissemination
Generation of Data on Power/Energy Production and Consumption		Annual	national	Six (6) months after the reference month
Generation of Data on Water Production and Distribution		Annual	national	Six (6) months after the reference month
Generation of Data on Power/Energy Production and Consumption		monthly	national	Six (6) months after the reference month
Generation of Data on Power/Energy Production and Consumption		monthly	national	Six (6) months after the reference month

Public Administration, Government Finance and External Debt

Activity	Agency	Frequency of conduct	Geographic Disaggregation	Schedule of data Dissemination
Generation of Statistics on Tax Revenue Collection	Maldives Inland Revenue Authority	monthly, annual	national	Monthly - 30 days after the reference month Annual - 60 days after the reference year
Government Finance statistics	Ministry of Finance and Treasury	monthly, annual	national	Monthly - 30 days after the reference month Annual - 60 days after the reference year
External Debt statistics	Ministry of Finance and Treasury	monthly, annual	national	Monthly - 30 days after the reference month Annual - 60 days after the reference year

Transport and Communication

Activity	Agency	Frequency of conduct	Geographic Disaggregation	Schedule of data Dissemination
Transport statistics	Ministry of Transport and Communication	annual	national, Male', Atolls	Three(3) months after the reference year
Communication statistics	Ministry of Transport and Communication	annual	national, Male', Atolls	Three(3) months after the reference year

Foreign Investment Statistics

Activity	Agency	Frequency of conduct	Geographic Disaggregation	Schedule of data Dissemination
Foreign Direct Investment survey	Ministry of Economic Development/Maldives Monetary Authority	annual	national, Male', Atolls	Three(3) months after the reference year
Foreign Direct Investment Statistics	Ministry of Economic Development/Ministry of Tourism	annual	national, Male', Atolls	Three(3) months after the reference year

Justice and Crime Statistics

Activity	Agency	Frequency of conduct	Geographic Disaggregation	Schedule of data Dissemination
Crime indicators	Maldives Police Services	annual	national, Male', Atolls	Three(3) months after the reference year
Justice Indicators	Department of Judicial Administration	annual	national, Male', Atolls	Three(3) months after the reference year