

INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT SECTOR FACILITY PROFILE

BARBADOS

MODERNIZATION OF THE BARBADOS STATISTICAL SERVICE

NOVEMBER 1, 2006

Project name:	Modernization of the Barbados Statistical Service		
Project number:	BA-L1009		
Project team:	Rafael de la Cruz, team leader (RE3/SC3); Jose Antonio Mejia-Guerra (SDS/POV); Sharon Miller (COF/CBA); Arnaldo Posadas (RE3/SC3); Desmond Thomas (RE3/OD6); Hernán Aspiazu (Consultant); and Ana Lucia Saettone (RE3/SC3).		
Borrower:	Government of Barbados		
Executing agency:	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Development, Barbados Statistical Service.		
Financing plan:	IDB:	US\$	5.0 million
	Local:	US\$	1.25 million
	Total:	US\$	6.25 million
Tentative dates:	Programming Committee:	November 2006	
	Main Mission:	November 2006	
	PRE Approval:	January 2007	
PTI/SEQ:	Given the nature of the program, involving institutional reforms, the activities to be financed in this program will not have negative environmental or social effects. The project will support the improvement and availability of gender and environmental related statistics.		

I. BACKGROUND

A. Economic and policy challenges

- 1.1 The Barbados economy has been characterized by macroeconomic stability and moderate growth for most of the last few decades. On the basis of a macroeconomic policy framework with a fixed exchange rate pegged to the US Dollar at BDS\$2:US\$1 as a central price anchor, the country has experienced steady growth averaging about 3% for most of the time since the early 1990s. This growth also resulted in a decline in the unemployment rate from a peak of 24% in the early 1990s to 9% in 2005 while inflation has been maintained at

around 2%. Externally, the balance-of-payments (BoP) current account deficit has widened, reaching 12% of GDP in 2005, and there was some international reserve loss in 2004. International reserves remain at a healthy level, but it is clear that the deteriorating external performance poses a serious challenge to continued stability in the Barbados economy. The Government imposed additional import duty and initiated monetary measures in 2005 to curb demand and the external deficit.

- 1.2 Given the fixed exchange rate regime, fiscal stability is the central mechanism for supporting overall macroeconomic stability. For most of the time, the fiscal deficit has been maintained within a target level of 2.5% of GDP. However the countercyclical response to the 2001-02 recession resulted in a widening of the overall fiscal deficit (including off-budget expenditure) to 11.6% of GDP and a debt/GDP ratio (including government and government-guaranteed debt) that grew from 74% in 2000 to 86% in 2004. The Government has set a target for reduction of the debt ratio to 60%, which will call for restraint on the fiscal deficit and public sector borrowing. At the same time, the Government has started a process of reducing income tax rates, dropping personal tax rates from 40% to 37.5% recently, and thought is being given to the establishment of a single national revenue agency.
- 1.3 In light of the balance-of-payments and debt challenges facing Barbados, the main priority of economic policy will be to strengthen the competitiveness of firms and the country as a whole. While the outlook for the leading tourism sector and for the growth of the economy as a whole is positive, the effort to lower the debt ratio and restore external balance, while strengthening competitiveness and modernizing the institutional framework will be an important focus of development policy over the foreseeable future. In this regard, the need for accurate and timely economic as well as social statistics will be more critical as efforts to boost productivity and business activity are increased through policy reforms and targeted projects. Good quality and timely statistics are critical as well for strengthening governmental policy design and decision-making.

B. Information and Statistical Issues

- 1.4 The Barbados Statistical Service (BSS) was established in June 1956 and reports to the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Development. In 1958 the Statistics Act, CAP 192, was passed. It empowers the BSS to conduct any census in the country; to collect, compile and publish statistics in a wide array of topics; and, to coordinate the statistical activities of other government agencies. The BSS is comprised of four subject matter divisions: trade and national accounts, business surveys, census and household surveys, and socio-economic statistics. BSS has 67 approved staff positions.
- 1.5 International and local demand for social statistics and living conditions data has increased significantly and come to the forefront of the agenda in Barbados. The year 1995, was to mark a turnaround in Barbados' development mandate as it signed and ratified the Copenhagen Declaration and Program of Action at the

World Summit for Social Development. This heralded a period with a renewed focus on social development but more importantly an emphasis on planned social development. The GOB embarked on a poverty reduction strategy, undertaking a Poverty and Income Distribution Study in 1996 to determine the geographical distribution of poverty and by extension indicate the areas experiencing the highest levels of deprivation.

- 1.6 By virtue of signing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Declaration, the country has received a renewed social development direction, which requires informed policymaking, planned decision making and critical and continuous measurement of the achievement of these goals, in addition to its other social development objectives.
- 1.7 Likewise, competitiveness challenges require from the Government as well as from the business community strategic decisions regarding public and private investments which need as a key input good quality and timely economic information.
- 1.8 Although the country has developed over time an effort to collect, process and disseminate relevant statistics, there is a general view among mayor public and private stakeholders that some key information is not available or is not available on a timely basis.
- 1.9 Preliminary economic statistical products identified in need for improvement include: (i) implementation of the 1993 system of national accounts; (ii) census of economic activity, with particular attention to trade, tourism satellite accounts, and agriculture; (iii) labor; and (iv) international business sector. Technical and administrative tools that need to be improved in order to enhance economic statistics are: (i) registry of businesses; (ii) constant price series; and (iii) design of questionnaires.
- 1.10 Regarding social statistics there is a need to improve data collection and/or processing related to the following fields: (i) population; (ii) education; (iii) health; (iv) poverty; (v) crime; (vi) housing; and (vii) environment. Main issues include: (i) lack of certain surveys conducted on a regular basis, (ii) difficulty for the BSS to collect information from the various agencies involved in data production; and (iii) lack of priority in certain agencies for collecting relevant data.
- 1.11 Main issues regarding the production and dissemination of statistics in Barbados include: (i) weak legal framework; (ii) insufficient coordination among governmental agencies that produces statistical data; (iii) inadequate timeliness and quality of data, particularly in the social field, but also in the economic area; (iv) insufficient experienced staff; (v) outdated technical infrastructure; and (vi) difficulties for the public, businesses and government to access relevant statistic information.

- 1.12 *The legal framework.* The effective collection of statistics requires the existence of legislation to authorize the process and to define the procedures, confidentiality protection and penalties governing the collection, analysis and dissemination of information. The existence of an adequate legal framework is therefore a critical condition for the management of a sound statistical system. In Barbados' case, the Statistics Act of 1958 focuses on regulating the activities of the BSS, it establishes its responsibilities and functions, and does so in a manner that leaves the BSS as the single entity responsible for all data collection in the country – although in fact many other agencies also collect and disseminate data. The Statistics Act is very general and leaves room for interpretation. For example, in terms of access to information and data dissemination, it establishes some clear limitations to protect the confidentiality of the informant and the statistical secret. These limitations have been interpreted to the extreme that all data from surveys and census has to be processed at the BSS, and cannot be shared even within the government.
- 1.13 It could be worthwhile to approve a new law or amend the current one in order to attend to issues such as: (i) broaden the coverage of statistical legislation to include not only the BSS but all other statistics producing units within other agencies and ministries; (ii) include provisions for a statistical system, including all relevant agencies under the leadership of the BSS; and (iii) update penalties to better allow for compliance by both those charged with collecting information and those providing information.. Alternatively, given that the current law is written in very general terms, another course of action might be to enact a regulation of the current Act by the Executive Branch through executive orders. Approving a new law or regulating the current one would be very useful to establish a suitable legal framework, but it is not a prior condition for advancing the other components of this operation. The section on special issues ponders the impact of the various legal options on the project components.
- 1.14 *Inter-agency coordination.* On one hand the law does not provide for coordination among agencies, or for the creation of a statistical system, in which BSS would play the central role of regulating its own data production and that of other agencies. On the other hand, there are no *de facto* current mechanisms for inter-agency cooperation regarding the collection and sharing of data. In Barbados, as in other countries, the sector ministries (Ministries of Education, Health, Social Transformation, Labor, Finance, etc.) produce many of the country's official information –such as statistics on education, health, social protection programs, and birth and death registration; budget, trade and immigration. There is a casual or lack of active cooperation from some line ministries in providing the BSS with operational statistics in a timely manner. Most information is provided to the BSS on a demand and case-by-case basis. Furthermore, each agency has its own standards, methodologies, definitions and procedures, which are not necessarily consistent with each other. This situation generates deficient data collection, processing and dissemination.

- 1.15 *Management structure and procedures.* Over the years, the BSS has consistently shown great attention to maintaining a high standard of professionalism. Nevertheless, the relatively low priority given historically to statistics in the country has contributed to certain institutional weaknesses which include: (i) accountability mechanisms; (ii) performance indicators and procedures; (iii) organizational structure; and (iv) administrative procedures.
- 1.16 *Data timeliness and quality.* Due to the lack of an effective inter-agency coordination, some organizational and administrative weaknesses of the BSS and of sectoral agencies, many statistics are made available with a considerable delay from the time they are gathered. The processing of data is slow, which diminishes the usefulness of information. This is a crucial problem for both economic and social data.
- 1.17 *Staff.* The competencies and experience of the BSS staff needs to be strengthened at this time in order to collect, process, and make available relevant statistical information in a sufficient quantity and quality. Salary is a factor that weakens the BSS ability to retain some key qualified personnel, but even as important, or more, is the lack of good opportunities for career advancement through training opportunities.
- 1.18 *Technical infrastructure.* There is a need to update the computer equipment and statistical software for the technical staff with the responsibility of producing the statistical information. The present equipment is several years old. Furthermore, there is the need for the BSS to have an appropriate system for data backup and storage. In addition, the BSS does not have the equipment necessary to create digital maps that would allow the institution to improve the use of its data for social programs targeting.
- 1.19 *Public access to statistics.* Available statistical information is difficult to access for a variety of reasons already mentioned, including that under some interpretations of the law data protection provisions prevent wider sharing of information; and that insufficient quality and timeliness of statistics is a disincentive for its use by most clients. But there are also technical reasons. Most data is presented in publications to which few people has access, and there is no electronic means available for dissemination of information.

II. COUNTRY AND BANK STRATEGIES

A. Country strategy

- 2.1 Barbados has set high priority on making the transition to a more competitive economy. The main issues driving medium-term priorities are: (i) the need to raise competitiveness in order to reverse the BoP deterioration and associated international reserve loss; (ii) the extensive changes in the international economic environment which Barbados faces following the WTO changes and other

impending changes in trade relations; and (iii) the need to achieve full readiness to implement the Caricom Single Market & Economy.

- 2.2 On the basis of these considerations, the Government is proposing measures to strengthen service orientation and productivity; foster the growth of tourism, international business and financial services; reduce taxes and modernize tax administration; and strengthen export promotion. In the social sector, the Government is committed to continued support for the traditional priorities of education and health, while paying increased attention to youth programs and assistance in the integration of persons with disabilities. There is also a significant environmental dimension among Government priorities. Along with these priorities, the Government recognizes the need for strengthening of its statistical services as critical to achievement of its goals.

B. Bank strategy

- 2.3 The overall goal of Bank support in Barbados for 2005-2008 (GN-2395) is to strengthen its competitiveness as a basis for sustained growth and improved well-being of the population. The specific objective of the Country Strategy (CS) is to raise the capacity of Barbados and its businesses to compete in a changing international economic environment. Consequently, this CS will pay attention to supporting economic and social conditions and institutional and policy frameworks that are conducive to increased productivity and performance by Barbadian firms and the economy as a whole.
- 2.4 On the basis of diagnostic work carried out in preparation for the CS, Barbados has been identified as a small, middle-income country experiencing slow but steady growth and beset by high vulnerability, fiscal and BoP challenges, public sector systems and management that lag behind in relation to the demands of an increasingly complex economy, a private sector environment in need of greater entrepreneurship and support to the development of the service economy. Moreover, Barbados now faces growing challenges and opportunities from an international economic environment that is becoming increasingly liberalized, information and communication technology-driven, while traditional international preferences are being eroded and competition is becoming more intense regionally as a result of the CSME, and in the important tourist industry.
- 2.5 The focus of the CS is on addressing institutional and capacity weaknesses that inhibit the efficient and competitive functioning of the public and private sectors. Consequently, it proposes a program that concentrates on small operations and facilities aimed at addressing such weaknesses through targeted interventions in areas such as the strengthening of statistical services.
- 2.6 The Bank has a long commitment for supporting the generation of high quality data that are the foundation for the design and evaluation of policies and programs that promote growth and poverty reduction. The Bank's experience in the strengthening of data producers and the promotion of the use of statistical

information for policy design and decision-making illustrates that a key ingredient for success is to focus on both the demand and the supply of data. Another crucial element is country ownership and understanding that a low intensity and long term involvement is key for sustainability. In recent years the Bank has provided funding to finance census related activities in Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Paraguay and Suriname, some of these operations have included resources to strengthen the statistical offices and their main data users. The Bank has also supported projects to strengthen the statistical system in Guyana and the Dominican Republic. Since 1996 the Bank, in coordination with the World Bank and Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), has supported the improvement of household surveys through the MECOVI program.

III. OBJECTIVES AND PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

A. Objectives

- 3.1 The general objective of the program is to strengthen the BSS ability to provide accurate and timely economic and social statistics, and to establish its leadership in this area of public administration.
- 3.2 The specific objectives of the program are: (i) assess the legal framework and propose a new one; (ii) establish an effective statistics network including governmental agencies which produce relevant public data; (iii) improve the managerial, statistical and administrative procedures of the BSS in close cooperation with the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Development (MEA&D); (iv) improve the human capacity of the BSS; and (v) enhance the technical infrastructure of the BSS and its capacity for disseminating its products and for facilitating public access information.

B. Description

- 3.3 The project will be comprised of five components, which address comprehensively the various issues identified.
- 3.4 **Component 1: Legal framework.** The law that regulates the statistical system in Barbados was approved in 1958 and revised later in 1984. An act focusing on vital statistics registration (births, deaths, marriages, divorces, adoptions, etc.) was also enacted in 1981. No further regulations have been approved since. A new Statistics Act would enhance the ability of the BSS to provide timely and useful information. The new law should, among other topics: (i) establish the technical independence of the BSS; (ii) assert its central role as the leader of a wider statistical system; (iii) clarify the scope of data protection; and (iv) make the BSS responsible for making information more accessible to users.

- 3.5 The project will provide technical assistance for a thorough diagnosis of the law and options for reform and updating of the legal framework.
- 3.6 **Component 2: Statistics network.** The program will provide assistance to improve the effective cooperation of the various governmental agencies that produce raw and elaborated data relevant to the responsibilities of the BSS. Coordination among producers of statistics should lead to a national program for statistics, with priorities set for various products, with identical concepts and definitions being used everywhere and full utilization of the national expertise in sampling questionnaires. This would imply support for all ministries involved in the form of training for staff, new information technology, complemented with clear and formal communication channels between the ministries and BSS.
- 3.7 This component comprises: (i) creation of a Statistics Steering Committee (SSC), lead by the BSS, including all fourteen ministries and the Central Bank, which will assure an effective inter-agency coordination in order to provide timely and accurate data to the BSS; (ii) setting of the administrative and operational procedures of the SSC; and (iii) standardize, to the extent possible, procedures, definitions, and methodologies at the ministries and agencies involved in the SSC.
- 3.8 It is expected that a Statistical Council is institutionalized by law once the new Statistics Act is enacted or a law regulation adopted. In the meantime, before the new law is approved the SSC should be created by Cabinet Resolution in order to improve institutional conditions for the collection, processing and dissemination of statistical information in the short term. The Statistical Council would eventually substitute the SSC.
- 3.9 **Component 3: Institutional reengineering.** The program will assess the current managerial, administrative, and technical procedures of the BSS in order to identify bottlenecks and inefficiencies, and to provide adequate options for streamlining and improving its performance. There is the need for supporting the BSS and relevant agencies for the collection, processing and dissemination of statistics. Special attention should be given to implementation of household surveys. There is also a need for improving the quality of statistics by reducing the rate of non-responses in surveys and to improve the timeliness of the production of the statistical information.
- 3.10 The assessment, options for reform, and actual institutional reengineering will include: (i) governance and managerial structure; (ii) administrative procedures; (iii) statistic methodologies; and (iv) assistance for the design and implementation of key surveys, including housing surveys. Although the BSS is the primary focus of the project, other relevant agencies will also be subject of assistance, particularly with regard to its capacity to collect, process and share statistical information.
- 3.11 **Component 4: Human capacity.** The program will support the BSS in preparing a strategy of human resources management transformation, and corresponding

- regulatory reforms if needed. The project will also provide training to BSS and other agencies staff.
- 3.12 This component comprises two sub-components: (i) creation of a human resources management system in the BSS, including updating of policies, procedures and a human resources information system; and (ii) training program, including academic scholarships and on-the-job technical development especially in the areas of statistical topics and new software in the BSS and other relevant agencies.
- 3.13 **Component 5: Technical infrastructure and public outreach.** The project will support the upgrading of BSS's information technology and will facilitate the access of the public to its various statistical products. Relevant agencies will also have access to technology improvement regarding statistical collection, processing and sharing.
- 3.14 This component comprises two sub-components: (i) hardware and software upgrading, including an intranet as well as networking with public agencies that provide information to the BSS; and (ii) a public webpage where BSS products are available to the general public.
- 3.15 **Sequencing of the components.** Project implementation should start by the creation of the SSC and the contracting of consultancy services. Component 1 may start by the assessment of the current legal framework and the proposal for reform. It needs to be noted that the other components can and should get started in parallel to Component 1, as the legal updating is not a preliminary condition for the implementation of the rest of the project.

IV. EXECUTION PLAN AND INSTITUTIONAL ASPECTS

A. The executing agency and organization for program's implementation

- 4.1 The official counterpart will be the MEA&D, through the BSS. The structure for execution is summarized below.
- 4.2 The BSS will execute the project with the support of consultants to handle project-specific activities. A Project Coordinating Unit (PCU) will be created reporting to the Head of the BSS. A project coordinator will head the PCU, and the staff will comprise an official in charge of procurement and administrative support, as well as a secretarial assistant.¹ These personnel will liaise with working groups at the various agencies represented in the SSC. The BSS will submit a proposal for the appointment of the project coordinator and the procurement/administrative official to the Bank. Appointments of the project coordination and the procurement/administrative specialist will be done after Bank's no-objection.

¹ A preliminary agreement has been reached with the Government to appoint civil servants as the Project Coordinator; a Procurement/Administrative Specialist; and a Secretarial Assistant on a full time basis.

- 4.3 The PCU will be responsible for: (i) proposing the project's operational annual plans and completed annual plans review to the MEA&D, to the Head of the Statistical Service and to the Bank; (ii) preparing detailed TOR for consultancies;² (iii) identifying and contracting consultants, and monitoring contract compliance; (iv) accounting and submitting fund replenishment requests to the Bank; (v) ensuring the coordination and collaboration of relevant governmental agencies with the consultants; (vi) ensuring the compliance with contractual conditions with the Bank and the timely presentation of required technical and financial reports; (vii) serving as a technical liaison with the Bank; and (viii) collecting and preparing data for project monitoring and evaluation.
- 4.4 The project will undergo mid-term and final evaluation. Specific indicators for these evaluations will be discussed with the BSS during the analysis mission.

B. Execution and disbursement schedule

- 4.5 The project execution period will be up to 36 months and the disbursement period will be up to 42 months.

V. SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

- 5.1 Given the nature of the program, involving institutional reforms, the activities to be financed in this program will not have negative environmental or social effects. The project will support the improvement and availability of gender and environmental related statistics.

VI. SPECIAL ISSUES

A. Government capacity for ensuring sustainable reforms

- 6.1 The experience in Barbados shows that institutional reforms of the public sector may be slowed down or abandoned over time for procedural, political or technical circumstances. The strong willingness of the MEA&D and the BSS for developing the reforms proposed in this project and thorough training following reform efforts should increase the feasibility and sustainability of the new institutional setting and provide viability and sustainability to the project outputs and outcomes.

² The project team will prepare draft terms of reference, as part of the project design, to provide guidelines for developing detailed TOR throughout the operation.

B. Inter-agency cooperation

- 6.2 The limited cooperation and coordination of the various agencies involved in the production of statistics and data with the BSS could prevent the project to fulfill its main purpose. The Government is aware of this issue and has declared its willingness to support the creation of a statistical network and to provide the regulatory and political framework to ensure its effectiveness.

C. Possible consequences of legal options on project components

- 6.3 If the final course of action were to approve a new Act or to amend the current one, a new legal, stable framework would strengthen the ability of the BSS to collect, process and disseminate statistics in the country, through an effective leadership of all public agencies that provide sectoral data. A second-best arrangement would be to enact an executive regulation of the current Act, which may have the same effects of a new law, but can eventually be changed by another executive order, so the sustainability of BSS leadership regarding the statistical network of public agencies involved in data production could be compromise over time.
- 6.4 In both cases there is a need for the Government and the project to provide incentives to the agencies involved in the statistical network to commit themselves to their role as providers, as well as clients of the BSS. Those incentives include participation in the process of project design and execution.
- 6.5 In the absence of any legal or regulatory change, the Government can create a working group of all agencies involved in the collection of statistics, under the leadership of the BSS, but the sustainability of this structure would be quite uncertain. If this is the case, the objective of component two of the project – statistic network- would be difficult to achieve, and could compromise the degree of improvement of certain statistical products which raw data is collected by agencies other than the BSS.

VII. COSTS

- 7.1 The total estimated cost of the program would be US\$6.25 million. The Bank will finance up to US\$5 million of the costs of the project under the modality of an Institutional Development Sector Facility. The local counterpart of US\$1.25 million represents 20% of the operation. See preliminary details in Table VII-1.

TABLE VII-1. PROJECT BUDGET (In thousand US\$)			
	IDB	GOB	TOTA
Project administration		500	500
Component I. Legal Framework	500		500
Component II. Statistics Network	800	100	900
Component III. Institutional Reengineering	1,000	150	1,150
Component IV. Human Capacity	1,200		1,200
Component V. Technical Infrastructure and Public Outreach	1,400	200	1,600
Contingencies and other expenses	100	300	400
TOTAL	5,000	1,250	6,250

VIII. PREPARATION STATUS, ACTION PLAN AND PRELIMINARY INDICATORS

A. Preparation Status

- 8.1 The project team has conducted one mission to the country and worked closely with governmental agencies involved in the program. The MEA&D has made available to the Bank a series of studies³ where main issues and strategies concerning social and economic statistics are discussed. Other studies are also available which provide a broad diagnostic of the statistical service in the country. The project team considers that there is a high degree of agreement between the Bank and the Government on the basic design of the project. Relevant information is available in order to proceed with the preparation of the Project Document once the Bank approves the profile and a new mission is conducted to develop and adjust the project strategy and components with the Government.

B. Action Plan

- 8.2 The Bank will contract one specialist in order to assist in the preparation of: (i) loan operational manual; (ii) plan of operations for the first year; and (iii) procurement plan. These tools will be developed in close coordination with the Government and will be completed by the time the project is negotiated prior to Bank's approval. The Government will appoint technical staff to cooperate with the Bank's project team in the preparation of the Project Document.

C. Preliminary Indicators

- 8.3 **Outputs:** The project will achieve its outputs if: (i) a draft new legal framework is prepared to be approved by the Government providing the BSS with technical autonomy and leadership over an inter-agency statistical network; (ii) a SSC is created including all agencies relevant to the collection, processing and dissemination of statistical information; (iii) statistical methodologies, definitions and procedures are standardized in all relevant governmental agencies; (iv) scholarships are effectively awarded so that a number of individuals are given the opportunity to obtain a higher degree education in statistics in an academically recognized university; and a number of individuals are trained-on-the-job and improve their statistical skills; and (v) the BSS and relevant agencies improve its technical infrastructure; and a webpage is available to the public containing statistical information updated regularly.

³ Barbados Statistical Service (2006), *Modernization of the Statistical Service*. Mimeo; Ministry of Economic Affairs and Development (2006), *A concept paper of social indicators in Barbados*. Mimeo; Ministry of Economic Affairs and Development (2006), *Enhancing the Quality of Economic Indicators in Barbados*. Mimeo; Barbados Statistical Service (2004), *Plan for the upgrade of the Statistical Service to rebase the constant price series, to compile quarterly estimates, and to improve the availability of social statistics*. Mimeo; United Kingdom Office for National Statistics (1997), *Strengthening the Statistical Service Department of the Government of Barbados: report, strategic plan and action strategies*. Mimeo.

- 8.4 **Outcomes:** (i) A new legal framework is enacted allowing the BSS be effectively established as the agency responsible for producing and disseminating national statistics; (ii) the quality and quantity of statistics improve and is offered to the public in a timely manner, including comprehensive social and economic information; (iii) the public, the business community and the Government use on a regular basis the information provided by the BSS; and (iv) the information available is relevant for supporting the decision-making process at all levels of Government, as well as for supporting business decision-making, academic research and public information.