

National Statistics System

National Statistics System Division (NSSD)

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Rationale for the NSS

I. Statistical information gap

- Insufficient supply (**Quantity problem**), especially small area data

II. Data quality gap

- Data of unknown quality (**Quality problem**)

III. Statistical skills gap

- Insufficient statistical skills (**Capacity problem**)

Statistics Act

(no. 6 of 1999)

Purpose of Official Statistics (§3)

- (1) The purpose of official statistics is to assist organs of state, businesses, other organisations or the public in—
 - (a) planning;
 - (b) decision-making or other actions;
 - (c) monitoring or assessment of policies, decision-making or other actions.
- (2) Official statistics must protect the confidentiality of the identity of, and the information provided by, respondents and be—
 - (a) **relevant**, **accurate**, reliable and **timeous**;
 - (b) objective and comprehensive [have **integrity** and not be biased];
 - (c) compiled, reported and documented in a scientific and transparent manner [i.e. **methodologically sound**];
 - (d) disseminated impartially;
 - (e) **accessible**;
 - (f) in accordance with appropriate national and international standards and classifications; and
 - (g) sensitive to distribution by gender, disability, region and similar socio-economic features

SASQAF dimensions of quality are embedded in the Statistics Act (no.6 of 1999)!

Duties and powers of the SG (§7)

(e) **formulate quality criteria** and establish standards, classifications and procedures for statistics;

(f) provide **statistical advice** to other organs of state;

(g) in terms of section 14, promote **co-ordination among producers** of official statistics in order to—

(i) advance the quality, consistency, comparability and optimum use of official statistics; and

(ii) **avoid unnecessary duplication**;

(h) endeavour to **fulfil the Republic's international statistical reporting** obligations;

(i) liaise with other countries and their statistical agencies and represent Statistics South Africa

internationally with regard to statistical matters;

Statistical Coordination among organs of state (§14)

(7) (a) The Statistician-General may designate as official statistics any statistics or class of statistics

produced from statistical collections by—

(i) Statistics South Africa; or

(ii) other organs of state, after consultation with the head of the organ of state concerned.

(b) Such designation must be in accordance with—

(i) the purpose of official statistics and the statistical principles contemplated in section 3; &

(ii) such other statistical criteria as the Statistician-General may determine by notice in

the Government Gazette.

SEPTEMBER 2008: SASQAF gazetted in Parliament as the SGs quality standard!

Definitions

Official statistics' definition is statutory – see Statistics Act [No. 6 of 1999]

Official statistics are statistics designated as official statistics by the Statistician-General within the provisions of the Statistics Act

Practical criteria of official statistics

- I. Must be used in the public domain
- II. Are from organs of state and other agencies that are partners in the National Statistics System [NSS]
- III. Are sustainable
- IV. Have met quality criteria as defined by the Statistician-General [SASQAF]**

National statistics' definition is implicitly statutory

National statistics are statistics not designated as official Statistics by the Statistician-General

Statistical Development: What does the NSS Do?



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- I. Expand the depth and breadth of official statistics through working with other government depts and municipal offices
- II. Improving the quality of statistics
 - i. Frame maintenance
 - ii. coordination and cooperation across agencies to maintain administrative data that is of mutual benefit
 - iii. Building an organisational culture that promotes accurate record-keeping

B. Ensuring implementation of common and shared standards through

- i. Quality Framework (i.e. SASQAF)
- ii. This ensures that there is no:
 - Duplication of collection
 - Respondent fatigue
 - Uncomparable statistics

C. NSS departmental partnerships ensures capacity building in relation to measurement, IT systems development, standards, quality, etc.

Experiences to date



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i. MDGR: 2005 – 2013

- i. Working with data providers for the different goals**
- ii. Ensuring that all data used in the report are quality assessed**
- iii. Ensuring the full participation of civil society organisations**

ii. Working with other government departments

a. Crime – development of standards

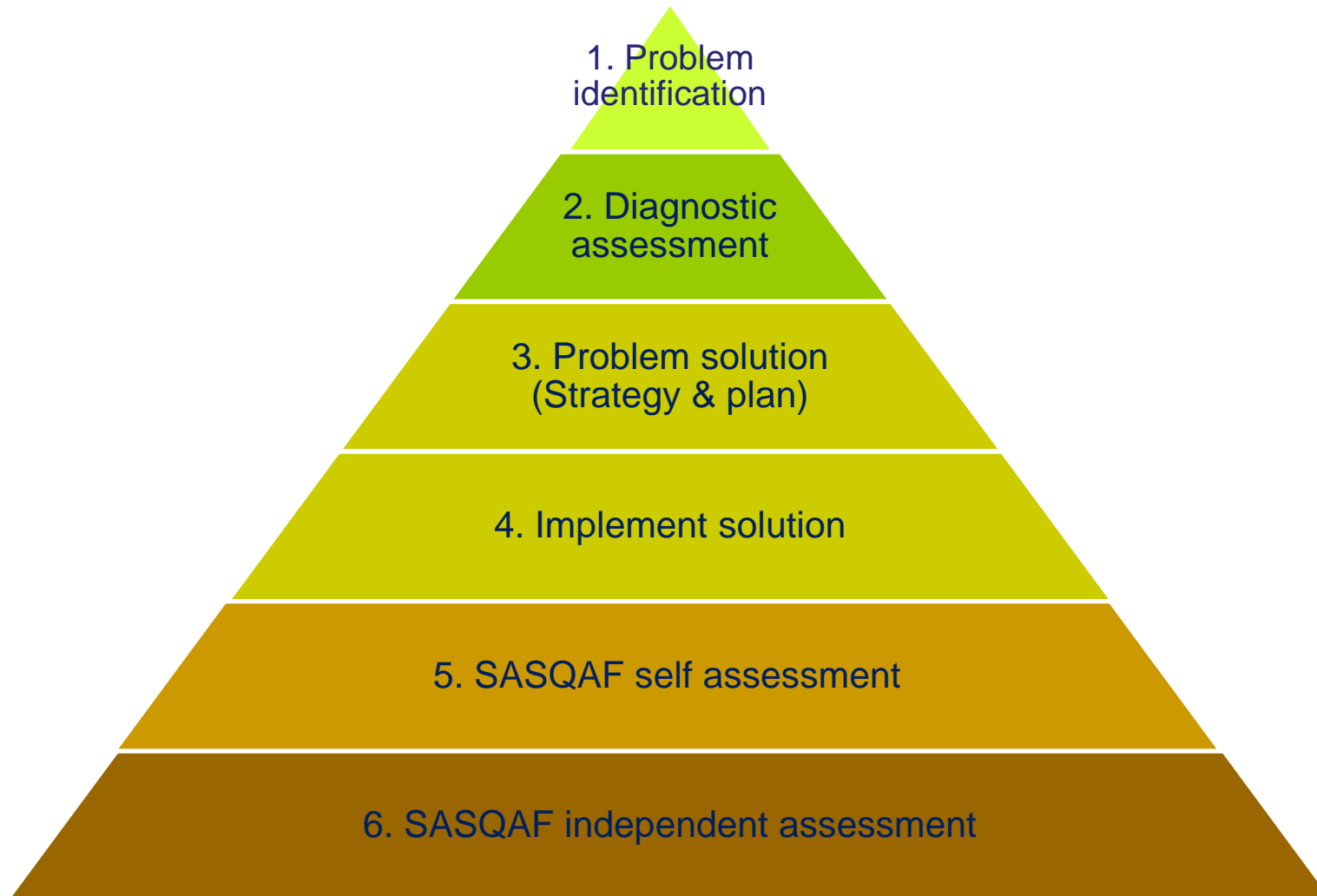
b. Education – assessment of admin records

c. Health – assessment

d. Environment – assessment and standards

e. Science and technology – assessment and standards

Framework of engagement in the NSS: Key components



Assessment of data for certification

Quality Dimensions

- Relevance
- Accuracy
- Timeliness
- Accessibility
- Interpretability
- Coherence
- Comparability
- Methodological soundness
- Integrity

Quality dimension comparisons

World Bank	EuroStat	South Africa	Canada	UK
Prerequisites of quality		Prerequisites of quality		
	Relevance	Relevance	Relevance	Relevance
Accuracy & Reliability	Accuracy	Accuracy	Accuracy	Accuracy
	Timeliness & Punctuality	Timeliness	Timeliness	Timeliness & Punctuality
Accessibility	Accessibility & clarity	Accessibility	Accessibility	Accessibility & clarity
	Coherence	Coherence & Comparability	Coherence	Coherence
		Interpretability	Interpretability	
Methodological Soundness		Methodological Soundness		
Integrity		Integrity		
	Comparability			Comparability
Serviceability				



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Process followed

- Product owner applies to the SG for certification of their data
- NSS ensures that the basic criteria for assessment is met: member of the NSS, produced stats should be beyond internal use and they must be sustainability,
- The SG appoints the data quality assessment team and independent assessors
- DQAT comprises: product owner, Chairperson as appointed by SG, Stats Council representative, user of the product, the independent assessors, methodology and subject matter experts
- The product owner is trained on SASQAF and does a self assessment
- The independent assessors assess the product
- The DQAT evaluates and outcome is presented to SG

Possible outcomes

- Level 4 : Quality statistics
- Level 3: Acceptable statistics
- Level 2: Questionable statistics
- Level 1: Poor statistics

For the product to be declared as official statistics it must be evaluated at level 3,5 and above.

Thank you