

## Terms of Reference:

### The Cayman Islands' National Statistical Coordination Committee (NSCC)

#### I. Background

Official statistics are statistics collected and published by governments and are financed by national revenue. In general, statistics that are official are justified by their “public goods characteristic”: unlike private goods, their use by one person does not exclude the use by other persons. They are costly to produce but are easily disseminated.

Often, official statistics are also justified by their pervasive role in society. They present the economic and social situation in an objective manner, and are used to monitor national progress and to assist in decision-making at various levels.

In addition to the Economics and Statistics Office (ESO), several units within the public sector of the Cayman Islands gather and collate official statistics. However, these do not yet constitute a national statistical system (NSS) - these units are not yet linked through a common legal or functional program or basis for official statistical activities. A national statistical system (NSS) is the “ensemble of statistical organizations and units within a country that jointly collect, process and disseminate official statistics on behalf of national government.”<sup>1</sup>

Official statistical activities consist of the setting of methods, techniques and procedures in the conceptualization, collection, processing, analysis and dissemination of official statistics.

The ESO has among its duties in the Statistics Law (1996 Revision) under Section 3:

“(d) generally to organize a coordinated scheme of social and economic statistics and intelligence pertaining to the Islands, in accordance with the Law.”

In accordance with the above mandate, one of the strategic ownership goals of the ESO for FY 2012-13 and the subsequent two years as included in the Annual Budget Statement is to “develop closer relations with other producers of statistics in government to facilitate the development of the country’s statistical system.”

In May 2005, a Caribbean Technical Assistance Centre mission noted in its report that “there are currently no means of setting priorities in the statistics area. The mission, therefore,

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<sup>1</sup> “Measuring the Non-Observed Economy: A Handbook, OECD, IMF, ILO, Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States, 2002, Annex 2, Glossary.”

recommended the creation of a national statistical coordinating committee. Such a committee would serve the purpose of advising the chief statistician on planning and prioritization in the statistical program.”<sup>2</sup>

In view of the above, the ESO recommends the establishment of the Cayman Islands’ National Statistical Coordination Committee (NSCC).

## II. Goals

Ultimately, the aim of the NSCC is to support *“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.”*<sup>3</sup> In other words, official statistics have a developmental role: good quality statistics can lead to better policies and decisions that result to socio-economic development.

Specifically, the NSCC will seek to coordinate the development of a national statistical system in the Cayman Islands that supports better statistics for decision-making in the public and private sectors, and lead to the socio-economic development of all residents.

The establishment of a NSCC is compliant to the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics Principle 8:

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

The NSCC will seek to achieve *consistency* by promoting the adoption of consistent concepts and definitions, methods and classifications in relevant data collection and dissemination activities across agencies in the public sector. It shall therefore aim to promote the practice of the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, international standards, methods and classifications.

The NSCC shall also seek to achieve *efficiency* in the production of official statistics through the sharing of data, infrastructure and capacity-building resources.

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<sup>2</sup> Mission Report: Cayman Islands, Caribbean Regional Technical Assistance Centre (May 2005).

<sup>3</sup> UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics

Coordination to improve efficiency in delivering official statistics is particularly important in the light of the following situation<sup>4</sup>:

- The statistical units are generally fragile or in a development stage;
- There are growing requests for statistics from national and international users;
- On the other hand, available technical and human resources are limited, often undermining the reliability and integrity of the data provided; and
- As part of the wider government administration, statistical units have to work on low budgets while still ensuring efficiency and productivity.

### **III. Functions**

It is envisioned that the NSCC shall initially focus on the following functions over the medium-term.

#### **1. Foster closer relations and linkages among producers of data**

- a. The NSCC shall conduct meetings and activities that will facilitate closer working relationships among data producers;
- b. It shall implement a national statistical information system comprising of an updated directory of statistical units in the government sector along with information on their statistical products, resources (including staff expertise), uses of statistics and users, data sources or providers, methodology and standards;
- c. It shall make recommendations in improving the Compendium of Statistics and other publications of the ESO; and
- d. It shall establish cooperative agreements regarding the sharing of data and statistical resources within the bounds of the agencies' operational laws and policies.

#### **2. Promote international statistical standards, classification systems, procedures and methods**

- a. It shall share information on statistical standards, classification systems, methods and procedures issued by the United Nations Statistical Commission and its affiliate international organizations;
- b. It shall facilitate proposals for external funding of projects that can assist in the adoption of international standards, classification systems, methods and procedures;
- c. It shall facilitate peer reviews of statistical reports, methods, procedures and techniques as necessary and subject to availability of resources; and

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<sup>4</sup> Adopted from "National Strategies for the Development of Statistics" presented by Clementina Ivan-Ungureanu at the CARICOM Seminar for Heads of Statistical Offices and National Accountants on the Implementation of the System of National Accounts 2008, October 31 – November 4, 2011, Belize

d. It shall form technical advisory committees for statistical projects as necessary and subject to availability of resources.

**3. Facilitate capacity building, statistical planning and prioritization**

a. It shall facilitate technical assistance and training among member agencies, from external organizations such as the CARICOM, and from member agencies of the NSCC;

b. It shall facilitate feedback and recommendations to the ESO as regards the prioritization of statistical programs in the ESO Strategic Plan to ensure their relevance to local needs; and

c. It shall promote statistical planning among member agencies or other agencies in the public sector with statistical functions, that will address issues such as:

➤ *gaps in statistical inputs* : institutional effectiveness; physical or capital resources; human resources; knowledge resources including classifications, methods and standards; management effectiveness; and

➤ *gaps in output* : coverage, periodicity and timeliness of statistics; access by the public; integrity; and quality.

**4. Conduct statistical dissemination and outreach**

a. It shall promote the role of statistics in strategic planning, particularly in their respective agencies or ministries; and

b. It shall plan and implement joint activities that will broaden the understanding and use of statistics in the community, and at engendering a wider support for statistical activities. These activities will include the Annual National Statistics Week and the International Year of Statistics 2013.

**IV. Membership**

The NSCC shall be a technical committee comprising of the ESO and all agencies in the public sector with statistical units or functions. Membership in the NSCC shall be voluntary, dependent on the willingness of the agencies and subject to their primary mandates.

In addition to the ESO, agencies that produce data for use by the general public will be invited to comprise the NSCC, among which are the following:

1. Department of Education
2. Department of Environment
3. Department of Environmental Health
4. Cayman Islands Monetary Authority
5. General Registry
6. Information and Communication Technology Authority

7. Immigration Department
8. Health Services Authority
9. Lands and Survey Department
10. Planning Department
11. Treasury Department
12. Department of Tourism
13. Statistical units of Ministries and other departments

Where possible, key users of statistics in the private sector may also be invited, such as business associations and schools.