Thematic study of support to statistical capacity building

Evaluation of the Paris Declaration

EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PARIS DECLARATION

THEMATIC STUDY OF SUPPORT TO STATISTICAL CAPACITY BUILDING

Synthesis Report

ISBN : 1 86 192 963 3

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This report should be cited as: *OPM (2009) Evaluation of the Implementation of the Paris Declaration: Thematic Study – Support to Statistical Capacity Building, Synthesis Report*

This report represents the views of the authors only. They are not necessarily the views of the participating countries and agencies.

Graphic Design: ph7 kommunikation, www.ph7.dk

The report can be downloaded directly from http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluationnetwork

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EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PARIS DECLARATION

THEMATIC STUDY OF SUPPORT TO STATISTICAL CAPACITY BUILDING

Synthesis Report

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May 2009

Preface

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) poses important challenges to the world of development cooperation. It is based on the simple but important assumption that aid will be more effective if the actions and behavioural changes listed as commitments under the five principles (ownership, alignment, harmonisation, managing for results and mutual accountability) are undertaken, and less if they are not.

The Paris Declaration deepened earlier commitments on aid harmonisation and alignment (Monterrey and Rome), and provided a practical, action-oriented roadmap, with specific targets for achievement by 2010. Mutual commitment by more than 100 donors and partner countries to this agenda strengthened its potential impact.

This paper (and its supplementary Evidence Reports) was commissioned by DFID as a thematic study to contribute to the Evaluation of the Paris Declaration. The primary objective of the first phase of the study was to develop a draft evaluation framework for statistical capacity building for future use, and to answer the overarching question: *"What development partner approaches to statistical capacity building have been most effective in different circumstances, and why".*

The study includes fieldwork in three countries, desk research on a further five, and two development partner organisation case studies. It identifies both positive developments in statistical capacity development over the last decade; and areas where assistance has been less successful. Overall, the study identifies two key drivers of successful support: 1) an explicit recognition of who the users of statistics are; and 2) an explicit recognition of the Paris Declaration principles in the design of capacity strengthening programmes. It finds that, in order to design and deliver effective programmes that not only meet the immediate needs of data users, but which also generate sustained improvements in statistical capacity, then both of these aspects need to be addressed.

The Paris Declaration, Managing for Development Results and Statistics Capacity Building

Reliable statistics are vital for good policy, to measure progress, and to report on development results at local, national and international levels. The issue of weak statistical capacity and the impact this has on development is well documented. Yet the findings of the first phase of the *Evaluation of the Paris Declaration* highlighted that of all the Paris commitments, progress has been slowest on 'managing for development results'; and that there is therefore a strong need to strengthen statistical capacities and to use them more effectively for decision-making.[1]

The Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness was held in Accra in September 2008 to take stock of progress in implementing the Paris Declaration commitments, and to consider what further commitments will speed progress in achieving the Declaration's objectives. A briefing paper from this evaluation was prepared as an input for Roundtable 4 on Managing for Development Results, given the emphasis placed on ownership and effective provision of statistics, and the importance of active support for more effective national statistical systems, as well as further exploration of the implications of changing approaches to aid delivery for statistics.

Longer term purposes of the thematic study

Many developing countries have struggled recently, to bring about effective collaboration among different national institutions, in order to support adequate monitoring of the implementation of poverty reduction strategies. Reporting on poverty and social welfare data in ways that is linked to improved information on what services government bodies are actually delivering and what they cost, has been particularly challenging.

The study therefore also seeks to inform future government and donor strategies for statistics, given the increasing

1 Wood, B. et al (2008) Synthesis Report on the First Phase of the Evaluation of the Paris Declaration, Copenhagen, p. xii.

emphasis on the role of reliable statistics for policy making, for measuring progress and for reporting on development results. It develops a draft framework for evaluating support to statistical capacity building in the context of the Paris Declaration. The framework may contribute as a basis for future donor assessments, prior to decisions regarding support to statistical systems. It could also be used as an evaluative tool to consider the results of national statistical capacity building.

This initial study is based on desk research (including a literature review and analyses of support to statistical capacity building in five countries - Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Liberia, Rwanda, and Tanzania); and on field work from three country case studies (Zambia, Niger and Cambodia) and two development partner case studies (Sida and DFID). The study looks back over 15 years of support (1992 to 2008) to establish lessons from past and current practices; the long timeframe facilitates a more thorough examination of capacity building, which is by nature a long-term process.

The Synthesis is supported by two Evidence Reports, which are available electronically – the first details the three country case studies, and the DFID and Sida cases (Part 1); and the second (Part 2) on the five limited desk based country studies. The evaluation was commissioned and managed by DFID on behalf of the Paris Declaration Evaluation (Lynn Macdonald). Strategic guidance was provided by a specially constituted Board, with inputs from the MAPS reference group. The Board comprised Professor Ben Kiregyera of UNECA as Chair, with Saraswathi Menon (UNDP and Paris Declaration Evaluation Management Group), Mats Alentun (replaced by Lars Johansson) (Sida), Pietro Gennari (UNESCAP), Charles Lufumpa (AfDB), Lynn Macdonald (DFID), and Antoine Simonpietri (PARIS21) as members. The initial results of the study were presented to partners of PARIS21 in June 2008. The PARIS21 Secretariat provided practical support and advice throughout the process.

This Synthesis Report was written by Mary Strode and Ian MacAuslan, with support from OPM team members. All reports and findings represent the views of the authors and not necessarily the views of the Steering Group, Management Board, or its members.

May 2009

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Chair, Statistical Capacity Evaluation Management Board

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Acknowledgements

In this report, we use the terms 'partner countries' and 'recipient countries' interchangeably to refer to countries that are net receivers of Official Development Assistance. We use the terms 'cooperating partners', 'external partners', and 'donors' interchangeably to refer to countries and organisations that are net disbursers of Official Development Assistance. This diversity in terminology reflects a diversity in use in the countries and organisations studied.

The team would like to thank all those individuals who provided help to this study, either through interviews, or providing information or logistical assistance. We are also very grateful to DFID and Sida for funding the study, and for their invaluable advice and support. Particular thanks go to the members of the PARIS21 Secretariat who have given us practical support, advice and invaluable information.

We are of course indebted to the staff of the country governments who assisted us during the country visits by arranging interviews and by making their time and own resources available to the evaluators. The countries concerned are of course Zambia, Niger, Cambodia, Sweden and the UK.

The initial results of this study were presented to partners at the time of the June 2008 PARIS21 meetings, we are indebted to those who made suggestions at that meeting and have done our best to incorporate them in the time available.

We are also indebted to the Management Board who have steered this study, particularly for their time, comments and suggestions. Special thanks go to Lynn Macdonald (DFID) for coordinating the study on behalf of the Paris Declaration evaluation.

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Executive Summary

Introduction

This paper develops a draft framework for evaluating support to statistical capacity building in the context of the Paris Declaration. This initial study is based on desk research (including a literature review and analyses of support to statistical capacity building in five low-income countries), and on field work from three low-income country case studies and two donor case studies. The study looks back over 15 years of support to establish lessons from past and current practices.

Following Paris Declaration principles is not the same thing as delivering relevant, efficient, effective, sustainable, and positive support to statistical capacity building. However it can contribute and the study shows that in most cases where Paris Declaration principles have been followed, the results of support to statistics have improved. Support delivered within larger programmes of predictable, coordinated support has been the most successful.

It seems that in comparison to other sectors, support to statistics has tended not to follow Paris Declaration principles. One reason for this is that official statistics are usually produced and used by a system composed of several different organisations, and there are often no effective strategies to coordinate this system, which makes it difficult for donors to harmonise and align their support. In addition, since statistics has until recently been relatively neglected by donors, few donors have invested in permanent country experts in statistics or results to support the statistical 'sector'.

Larger scale country based programmes, and particularly country-held common funds, seem more likely to meet the Paris Declaration principles. Results focussed governments were more likely to have statistical systems that were supported in ways which largely met Paris Declaration principles. Although experience with country-held funds is not extensive, the available evidence suggests that country funds produce strong results when linked to highly policy-relevant plans; and where the statistical producers are held accountable by a well-functioning governance body, which is in turn accountable to a government with a strong results focus.

It is increasingly common to deliver support through globally managed initiatives. Management at a global level makes these initiatives particularly difficult to administer in ways that meet Paris Declaration principles, because they are neither owned by individual countries nor well aligned to their statistical priorities, institutions or procedures. This need not be detrimental to statistical capacity building in some contexts, but does indicate that a stronger representative presence is needed at country level when making decisions or managing support. In general, it appears that global initiatives are most effective at building sustainable statistical capacity when concerned with setting standards, providing tools or when decision-making is decentralised to maximise ownership by country-level statistical users and alignment to their needs. As DFID's experience in Tanzania shows, the presence in country of a lead donor with expertise in statistics improved donors' coordination of support to statistical capacity building.

Context for Statistics in Development

Statistics are used not only by citizens or governments, but also by the international and donor communities, among whom demand has been particularly strong in recent years[2]. In Box 1.1 the major types of use for statistics is listed, in approximate order of country ownership needs. It will be noted that users of statistics are globally based.

2 Weak home demand has been widely recognised as an inhibiting factor in building capacity and it could be argued that international demand is much stronger than country demand.

Box 1
Usage of official statistics in order of priority for national results management

1. To facilitate design and adoption of government policy measures responsive to the evolving needs of the country and its economy.
2. To enable programme and policy objectives to be expressed in the form of explicit time-bound output (and sometimes outcome) targets that can significantly improve the performance of public services (as, e.g., in performance-based budgeting).
3. To allocate resources geographically.
4. To improve the flow of information to citizens throughout the country and hence enable them to make sounder business and family decisions.
5. To stimulate and feed democratic debate on issues of public policy and enable the government in office to give account to the electorate for its initiatives and performance.
6. To help meet the information needs of potential foreign investors and visitors to the country (including press and other intermediary agencies serving them).
7. To fulfil accountability and fiduciary responsibilities to foreign governments and international institutions for any assistance they have provided.
8. To provide accurate reports to bodies which have been charged by the international community with the task of keeping track of world performance on many economic, environmental, social and other issues.

The needs of the many user groups identified above means that 'country ownership' is difficult to establish, as all of these groups potentially 'own' the agenda. These groups have different - though often overlapping - statistical priorities. For example, country management (including policy design, public sector performance, and resource allocation) requires foremost economic and financial statistics[3], and high definition local data. These statistics are usually generated by economic surveys, and regular administrative collections corroborated by occasional sample household surveys. Citizens tend to be most interested in data about local conditions, headline performance indicators, and topical social, political, and economic issues. The international community generally prioritises nationally representative data on development outcomes and impact, such as those captured by the Millennium Development Goals. Since statistical capacity is typically limited and not all priorities can be met, whose priorities should support to statistics endorse?

The balance between these different priorities and the overall demand for statistics has been affected by changes in the aid architecture. Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) incorporate a set of indicators to monitor select outputs and outcomes.[4] All countries have signed the Millennium Declaration and need to monitor the associated Millennium Development Goals that assess development outcomes; this includes developing countries and their development partners. The more recent introduction of budget support and performance-based budgeting[5] has led to a newer demand for more detailed information relating to service delivery and to results from smaller geographical areas. This latter demand more closely follows some of the needs of governments in managing the delivery of services and seems to be leading to stronger demand for data in-country.

Evidence from the study suggests that cooperating partners have not always provided support to statistics that endorses all the recipient governments' priorities. Support has been more available to social statistics and to household surveys in particular, particularly in the sectors of health, poverty and education, which have been embedded in the PRSPs and sector programmes. While this focus has been appropriate—i.e. first generation PRSPs have had a strong focus on delivering in the social sectors—the relatively low weight placed on growing government priorities in agricultural, financial and economic measurement has led to some frustration in the case study countries and concern that basic economic management is being hampered by poor statistics.

The Importance of Ownership

Ownership is vitally important for statistics in strengthening results management. With limited capacity and resources, the statistics that meet the most pressing needs of country policy making must be met. The ownership must be much wider than obtaining consent from the government statistics office: it should be ownership from a broad range of stakeholders and very carefully prioritised. A balanced prioritisation is not easy to achieve. A statistics office provides a service to its users within and beyond government, and does not necessarily reflect the priorities and wishes of governments, let alone a broader group of users. The accountability of statistical agencies to their own governments and citizens is often very weak, a problem exacerbated by the fact that a majority of funding for data collection usually originates from donors. Incentives offered by surveys have meant that statistical agencies and sponsoring cooperating partners have a common interest in conducting social surveys that yield results relatively quickly, often at the expense of more sustainable routine data and economic series. In the case studies, economic statistics are generally more likely to be supported by governments than by donors, and the results tend to

3 See Kibuka (2007). 'Mainstreaming Statistics in the PRS Approach to Provide for More Effective Technical Assistance: Some Experience at the IMF' for details relating lack of support to key economic and financial statistics

4 The International Monetary Fund's Independent Evaluation Office's Evaluation of the PRSPs found 'that the indicators and monitoring arrangement contemplated in the PRSPs far exceed the underlying data capacity to collect and analyze the underlying data'.

5 Performance-base conditionality would have the same effect.

be produced in a more timely fashion. In the countries studied the methods used to produce economic series are mostly outdated, yet efforts to modernise them have been squeezed out by the financial resources flowing into social statistics.

Draft Evaluation Framework for Support

In preparing for the scaling up of support to statistics the terms of reference for this study require that the following is established.

- The results that successful support to statistical capacity building should produce, and
- The conditions under which increased support is likely to yield results.

The Desired Results

Statistical capacity building is defined in this report as activities that strengthen the pillars of statistical capacity. Statistical capacity usually refers to the ability of statistical producers to serve the needs of users with quality statistics that meet the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics[6]. Quality includes timeliness, reliability, accessibility and relevance, and this can be measured by the Data Quality Assessment Framework (DQAF). The ability to produce statistics is partly captured in the World Bank Statistical Capacity Indicator.[7] Given different country statistical contexts, the range and the balance of products in respect of different needs will vary, and any measure of capacity should include some measure of their use, and the underlying conditions in which they are produced such as qualified staff and appropriate legal and administrative context. This study has produced a draft evaluation framework that builds on these indicators and extends them towards the use of statistics and the statistical system.

Successful support to statistical capacity building will lead to improvements in the ability to serve users and to support the results agenda. However, given that resources available for support to statistics are finite (though increasing), the costliness of these improvements must be considered. In general, there is great uncertainty around the costs of statistical capacity building and statistical outputs, and this complicates any attempt to adjudicate between different activities on the basis of relative efficiency. Just as there is little evidence on the relative costs of different statistical methods for collecting the same data, there is little evidence on which methods of supporting statistical capacity are most cost-effective. In future, more consideration needs to be given to the relative costs of support to the necessary conditions of successful statistical capacity building, set out below.

While support to the production of statistics has increased, the link between production and use in country is still far too weak. Very little support has been given to improving data accessibility, aside from the accelerated data programme and users report problems with access, comparability, quality and presentation of statistics. Key surveys for PRSP monitoring regularly miss the opportunities in the policy cycle to influence decision making.

Constraints

The team considers that capacity constraints are a likely bottleneck in the scaling up of support to statistics. The availability of suitably qualified and trained staff was a universal constraint, and particularly problematic in countries with no national statistics training school and in countries emerging from war. Some of the countries studied had very few qualified staff, and anecdotally one West African country was mentioned which reputedly had none at all. Scaling up support in such contexts will obviously meet with limited success unless the bottlenecks are removed, and this may not be immediately solvable.

In most contexts capacity is limited, and demands need to be very carefully prioritised to match capacity. To date prioritisation has been largely led by the availability of uncoordinated donor funding. What gets funded gets done, and this often reflects the statistical priorities of the funders more than those of governments. In contexts where strategies are unrealistically broad in relation to capacity to carry them out, a selective 'á la carte' approach to alignment to country strategies can emerge.

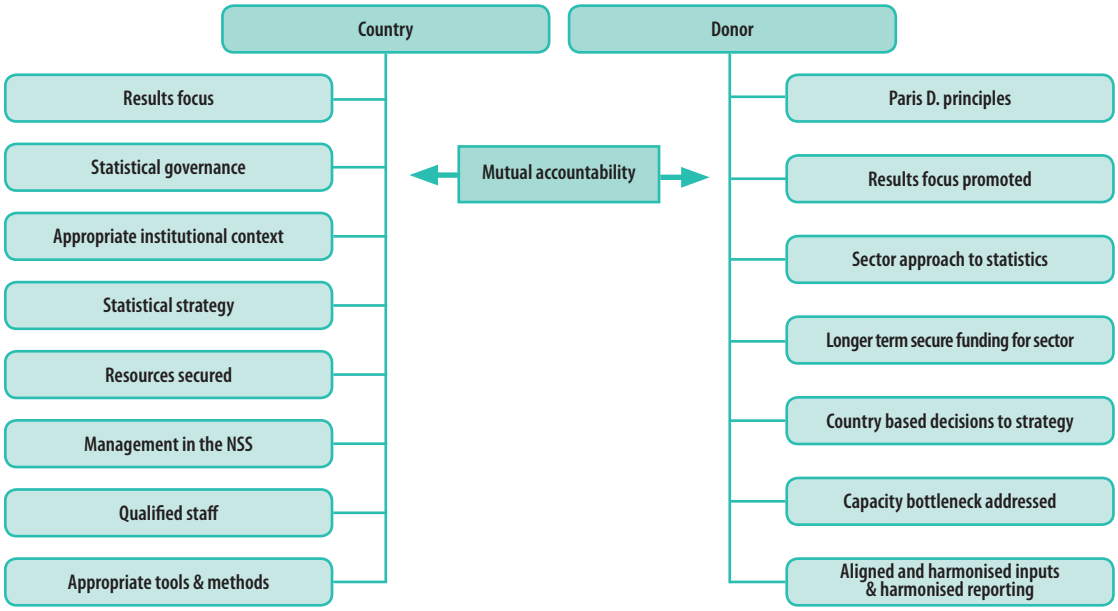
The Draft Evaluation Framework

The study has identified several pillars of statistical capacity and has tested them in eight countries. The pillars can be expressed in terms which relate strongly to the Paris Declaration principles (see Section 5). The team recommends that this draft framework is used to make an analysis of country systems prior to making investments in capacity building. This will help to ensure that weaknesses are addressed in the support offered by partners, and that support is provided that is relevant to the country governance, institutional and organisational context. The diagram below sets out the pillars of capacity derived from this study. The 8 pillars on the left of the diagram comprise the conditions which are necessary for effective capacity building. These pillars are elaborated into evaluation questions which relate to the DAC evaluation criteria. On the right hand side the donor or cooperating partner behaviour which enhance capacity building are set out. These are independent of the capacity building pillars but relate closely to them.

6 Statistical capacity need not be entirely government-based: it can be based in regional organisations, academia, or the private sector.

7 http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/DATASTATISTICS/0,,contentMDK:20541648~menuPK:1164885~pagePK:64133150~piPK:64133175~theSitePK:239419,00.html

Figure 1 Evaluation framework for support to statistics



A Focus on results based management at the highest level of government

This is the highest level factor identified, and is a necessary condition for statistics to thrive in any country. **Results based management** implies that decision-makers are held accountable for decisions by higher authorities. Demand for results at the highest level in government was established in the case study countries in a number of different ways. Demand for results was in one case created by national concerns over a low score in the Human Development Index, in others by an established commitment to managing by results at the highest level in government. Donor focus on results linked to budget support can stimulate a high level demand, but the evaluation found little evidence that statistics were discussed at high level negotiations between partners.

As a result, statistics strategies are most often developed in parallel stakeholder discussions[8] to establish statistical priorities, and miss the vital deliberative forums in which policy, its monitoring systems and indicator needs are agreed. The necessary political momentum and accountability framework for statistics is therefore missing. Lacking this imperative, statistics are too often not delivered in time to meet the policy timetable in which the PRSP or equivalent country or sector policy context is developed.

A decision to scale-up support to statistics in a country should be supported by a constructive critique of the factors outlined in this paper and high level country discussions relating to its results context. Without a commitment at the highest level to results, the country will have an inhospitable statistical environment. It is most unlikely that sustainable capacity can be built in this environment.

There has been too little attention paid to establishing hospitable statistical environments. There has been some excellent global statistical advocacy, but too little attention has been paid to encouraging the use of statistics by those developing policy or allocating resources within country. Recent initiatives in improving the accessibility of data are likely to be beneficial, if supported by country programmes for data users.

B Accountability of the statistical system to government

Once a results focus has been established, the key process in ensuring the good performance of statistical systems is the development of **accountability** to the government. The simple existence of a Board or Council, or a Statistical Law, or agency status is not sufficient. Where the statistical agency is semi-autonomous, the Board or Council should be the accountable body for the performance of the statistical agency, and at least, depending on the country, report on the state of the statistical system[9]. The study uncovered several cases where the accountability to the Board was undermined by parallel accountability mechanisms to donors, or where Boards were not fully accountable for the agencies' performance due to their method of appointment, composition or the expectations placed upon them by government. Where the agency is still part of government, then a well constituted Statistical Council can still play a role in reporting on statistical performance.

8 PARIS21 Secretariat (2004). 'A Guide to Designing an NSDS', November 2004

9 Its role over other statistical producers in the NSS will depend on the local context of statistical governance.

The studies show that better results occur where the Statistical Board or Council holds the statistical producer accountable for meeting the performance targets set by its own government or parent ministry. To maintain the accountability to top-level government, the Board or Council should be required to report on statistical performance to Parliament or other high level users such as the Cabinet or President. If this is not the case then the statistics agency will be largely unaccountable for meeting its commitments. At present statistical agencies are largely unaccountable to their governments, or accountable to several donors who have available to them very few sanctions, other than to withdraw funding. The withdrawal of funding by one partner in the presence of a strong demand for data is likely to be replaced by support from another cooperating partner.

This is an issue of **harmonisation** for all cooperating partners. Proposals for scaling up support to statistical systems should be careful to avoid parallel reporting systems to external partners. This has the effect of undermining national **ownership** and **mutual accountability** processes. Cooperating partners also need to harmonise support within their own organisations—between departments supporting monitoring systems, departments supporting sectors and departments supporting statistics.

C Appropriate institutional context

The institutional context of a statistical system is critical to its effectiveness. This includes both the legal context, coordination of the national statistical system, and the conditions of service of statisticians. If coordination is not addressed then conflicting estimates on a similar indicator will be produced from various parts of the statistical system and will undermine credibility and trust in statistics. Only recently has the coordination of the wider statistical system been addressed in statistical support. Sector ministries have been, and will be, responsible for producing their own statistics in most cases, but these have to be harmonised and quality assured, usually by the central statistical agency to ensure that results are credible.

Administrative reforms are often necessary, and relate not only to salary and conditions of staff, but to the freedom for managers to organise their agencies effectively. In Cambodia changes to the organisation structure were delayed by higher authorities, in Zambia promotion, recruitment and staffing decisions were handled by the parent ministry in a slow, unresponsive and very bureaucratic way. Reformed statistical organisations are often able to relieve themselves of the costly burden of large numbers of unproductive staff. The major advantages to autonomy seem to the evaluators to be freedom to reform, but this has to be linked to good accountability mechanisms and public sector reform more generally.

Conditions of service, as in any organisation, are critical to recruitment and performance. Good conditions of service for government statisticians are particularly important where statisticians are scarce and demand for them is high (from donor organisations and the non-government sector). In some cases conditions have been improved by granting agency status to the statistical office and allowing it to determine its conditions of service and organisational structure independently of the general civil service. However this is not a given and there are many examples of autonomy where salaries have remained low—as the government still has to meet the wage bill. In some of our case studies donors have paid salary top-ups, which can be effective if universally applied although there are concerns over sustainability.

D Strategy for statistics

A strategy for statistics is vital for planning. Among other things it identifies capacity needs, organisational change processes, priorities and resource requirements. In terms of Paris Declaration principles it should address coordination problems and facilitate government funding and the **alignment of cooperating partners**. Their products and work programmes need to be flexible to meet with changing national circumstances and demands.

Strategies have proved to be very useful in Tanzania in limiting the demands for information to those core statistics required by the PRSP and government; and in providing the funds to carry them out in a planned and secure way. Burkina Faso and Niger were also able to secure funds against a strategy. Insecure funding of statistical systems tends to mean that plans are focussed on ways of attracting funding. Without a realistic strategy, the evidence shows that cooperating partners will tend to undermine one another, duplicate activities, overstretch limited capacity in the statistical agency and tend to drown out the statistical needs of the country. The strategy forms the focus for alignment, but it has to be securely funded and realistic in respect of the countries' capacities to deliver. The element of realism has proved quite difficult to ensure. However, a strong governance mechanism that holds agencies and their managers accountable may lead to more realistic planning approaches over time.

The **ownership of statistical strategies** needs to be maximised by ensuring that statistical strategies are considered concurrently with other policy planning processes. It may be worth considering developing a regular process in countries, similar to or even as part the PRSP process, with each user ministry drafting its own sectoral chapter, guided by the statisticians, but not written by them, and with representatives of civil society and the private sector having an active and meaningful role.

The study shows that statistical agencies may be tempted to take on too much work, and the quality of results may suffer. Where donors are well aligned, and where there is a knowledgeable local lead donor, then discussions will be required to develop a realistic work programme and suitable support. The study noted that in countries with a weak results focus, there was often too little discussion about statistics between

cooperating partners, users and statistical agencies, resulting in weakly focussed strategies.

E Resources for statistics

One of the major challenges for statistical managers is the search for funding for statistical activities. Only recently have country statistics funds or statistics sector-wide projects become more common. There is some evidence, although not strong, that governments are now stepping in to fund, via budget support, some of their own statistical priorities such as economic surveys or data for Consumer Price Index modernisation.

Harmonisation of funding was particularly problematic in study countries where several donors provided earmarked funds for the same activity, but had different accounting and disbursement schedules delaying the statistical production process and increasing transaction costs. Among the more successful funding arrangements were those that combine a strategy and an associated fund around which partners could align. This provided a secure, predictable funding environment which respected **country ownership**, however the governance of the funds established parallel **accountability mechanisms** to the statistical agencies' own Boards.

Global funds, where the accountable officers were based outside the country remote from continuing country dialogue, could be unresponsive and bureaucratic. They sometimes lacked **accountability** in country to government stakeholders.

Assured funds are a necessary but not sufficient factor in improving statistical performance. One country in the study for example, had received a Statcap loan[10], but despite the increase in resources, the quality of output had not yet improved. Subsequent support from development partners is now to be channelled through its governance body to improve **accountability** and performance.

Mutual accountability has been problematic. Where a number of donors have contributed to censuses or surveys the common complaint from countries is that funds arrive too late, and delay the onset of fieldwork which is often severely affected by seasonal factors. The complaint from donors is that results are not produced in a timely fashion: rarely is the link between late funding and late results made. In addition, dialogue between statistical agencies and their funders is weak, and tends to be on a bilateral basis. There seemed to be reluctance to enter into a joint, constructive dialogue with the statistical agency on the part of the donors. This is exacerbated by the omission of statistics as a sector in Joint Assistance Strategies.

F Management in the statistical system

Improving the management capacity of statistical offices has not received adequate support. As in any organisation, statisticians' performance is affected by a range of factors, including salary, career and personal development opportunities, and organisational culture. Inhibiting young statisticians' chances of advancement by poor promotion and management practices does little to improve morale or performance and increases levels of attrition. Similarly, effective use of resources, good decision-making and the ability to prioritise are critical to the performance of these offices, but strong management skills are not always present.

Support to management has been relatively limited. Developing management skills is one of the perceived advantages of twinning arrangements, but the focus on management has been seen as something to be tackled in the later stages of a programme when trust has been established. Most often technical issues form the major focus of support, partly because this is the most comfortable area for both sets of partners to work in. Although good management is critical to good statistics and to delivering efficient support, management is difficult to improve unless the **accountability**, strategy and funding mechanisms are in place. Critically, management may be severely constrained by the institutional context.

Only recently has there been support to managing statistical coordination from the various national producers of statistics. Some support has been made on the dissemination side (DevInfo, GDDS), but more support will be needed to manage the process of national statistical coordination.

G Qualified staff

Qualified and suitably trained staff are the bedrock of the statistical system. Without them quality will be low and sustainability absent. At least two countries in the study were limited by the availability of qualified staff, and even in some of the better qualified offices the lack of good computing or of data analysis skills prevented the implementation of improvements to some systems. The availability of statistical schools producing trained graduate statisticians was a priority for every statistical manager interviewed in the study. The study noted that grants to statistical training schools and to trainees now were less common than in earlier years, and in Anglophone Africa this was raised as a severe capacity issue. Francophone countries in Africa were rather better provided for. In a situation where statisticians are demanded by many better paying agencies beyond the public sector, it is important to maintain the supply. However, there was little evidence of strong donor support to statistical training schools in some regions during the more recent years of the study.

The availability of qualified staff has often not improved in line with needs. In the early 1990s developing country statistical offices tended to have spare capacity as home grown demand was weak, while the efforts to build statistical skills by training and technical assistance had been largely successful. The increased demand for statistics arising from PRSPs was able to build on this capacity. However, by 2000 the demand for statistics, particularly from development partners, began to exceed the capacity of countries to deliver the statistics; while

10 A World Bank loan facility that offers loans for statistical capacity building.

at the same time the demand for statistically trained staff from international organisations grew. In some countries the availability of qualified statistical staff has been eroded by external factors such as the AIDS pandemic or war. This has been exacerbated by the drying up of sponsorship for statistical training from development partners.

While formal training to degree level is a necessary base for quality and for further training, real sustainable impact in offices with qualified staff was achieved by long-term on-the-job support to trained statisticians, either by technical assistance or by twinning arrangements. There was little evidence that workshops or short–term training inputs improved skills, although they proved useful in introducing new ideas or honing well established skills. To put it in the words of one of the interviewees, "workshops tell you what to do, but not how to do it". Regional training, where long-term and focussed on country needs (rather than international ones) was clearly successful.

H Appropriate methods and tools

A necessary input to statistical capacity is the availability of appropriate methods and tools to produce statistics. There are a range of techniques with which statistical information can be collected, transmitted and analysed. It is not the case that a technique that is appropriate in one context will be appropriate in another, due to differing infrastructure, economies agro-climatic conditions and so on. The techniques for measuring crop yields in hilly fields growing a mixture of inter-planted crops differ from those appropriate for flat fields growing a single crop in one growing season. Collecting business statistics in a country with many important companies that are not listed and do not respond to letters is different from collecting them in an environment where they do. Developing techniques that meet local needs will always require both time, the introduction of new office practices and skilled staff.

Application of the Draft Framework and Further Work

The draft framework set out in Section 5 should form the basis of an assessment or constructive critique prior to decisions to support a statistical system. It can identify strengths and weaknesses and point to the range and scope of the interventions needed. It can also be used as an evaluative tool to consider the results of a statistical capacity building intervention. However there will be some further work required to:

- Test further its applicability, particularly in non-African contexts.
- Calibrate and benchmark indicators of good performance under each pillar.
- Consider more carefully issues of cost, efficiency and alternatives.
- Study more deeply **accountability** mechanisms, and prepare benchmarks.
- Identify the likely needs of the user groups identified and advise on how to maximise attention to country needs and **ownership**; and how to balance this with and satisfy the demands of the international community. This is likely to require further work on identifying the **core** functions and activities of a national statistical office.
- Study further capacity bottlenecks and means of developing realistic strategies.
- Feed into work on statistical capacity indicators.

The application of the draft evaluation framework may cause some agencies working in statistics to work beyond the rather narrow technical transfer of statistical skills that currently forms the focus of their work. It will require that statistical support offers a wider range of capacity building to include organisational change and much stronger national links with monitoring systems and other policy processes. If the full results agenda is to be strengthened then moving beyond the technical issues of statistical production will be essential.

Countries in Fragile Situations

The Board requested that some explicit thought was given to the extent to which support to statistical capacity building should differ in countries in fragile situations – those which are for instance emerging from conflict or crisis, and which have from a very low statistical base. The evidence suggests that it is appropriate initially to treat these countries rather differently from most in supporting statistical capacity building. Most states in these situations will have a limited supply of, and limited internal demand for, statistics. In others access to data may be limited by political considerations. The actions and activities of cooperating partners will need to be different from those where there is a results focus at the highest level. In most cases capacity will have been destroyed, yet statistics are urgently required to provide services to displaced and returning citizens and to rebuild the economy in post crisis situations. Statistics are not usually an early priority for partners. However, the study found several successes, including in Liberia, Rwanda, and Cambodia.[11]

For countries emerging from conflict or crisis, partners should give early focus to establishing a base of statistically qualified staff on which to build at a later date. The large volume of statistics required for re-establishing services in these states will need very high levels of donor support, and the use of twinning and long-term advisers is very relevant in these situations where management capacity is likely to be weak. It is important not to overload these offices, and some data could be obtained by largely extractive methods. Harmonisation is important to avoid duplication, to focus on essentials and lay the basis for statistical capacity building and planning.[12]

A population census is an early priority, and this can provide basic information of the whereabouts and characteristics of the population. It also provides statistical agencies with the

11 See Evidence Report Part I Cambodia, and Part II Liberia 165; and Rwanda 6.

12 The note on the Paris Declaration and support to fragile and conflict affected situations (undertaken in another thematic study for the Paris Declaration) also underscores the importance of harmonisation.

basic infrastructure of statistics. Regional statistical partners can be effective in providing effective support to modernise basic economic series prior to complete overhaul and reform. More details are found in Section 6.6.

Recommendations

The study indicates several ways in which support to statistical capacity building could be improved. Although these have been mentioned throughout this summary, it may be useful for presentational purposes to summarise them very briefly here. They are repeated and slightly expanded in section 8.

- More support to capacities to analyse and use data.
- More support to administrative data systems in sector ministries.
- More support to improving data accessibility.
- More support to the upper pillars, to improve the:
  - Results focus
  - Accountability
  - Institutional environment, and
  - Management.
- All support to statistical capacity building should be compliant with Paris Declaration commitments where support involves any activities in partner countries.
- Invest in increasing the supply of trained statistics through investments in statistical schools or in funding students;
- Support capacity development in other national organisations with statistical capacity, such as research institutes, academia, and non-government organisations.
- Much closer consultation with partner country governments and institutions about the scope and nature of support.
- Recognise explicitly a possible trade-off between timely, quality, internationally comparable data and sustainable capacity building.
- Recognise explicitly that although most data is quite useful to everyone, donor organisation statistical *priorities* (including reporting to their own governments or boards on progress against e.g. MDGs) may differ from partner country statistical *priorities* (including having available economic series or facility-level data).
- Give sufficient support to long-term, broad statistical strategy development.
- Ensure that statistics strategies are always fully integrated into national planning processes, and not conducted separately.
- Support strategies once prepared, and not deviating from their contents or picking favourite items to support.
- Ensure that sector-wide approaches to statistics are taken. This could be facilitated by:
  - A statistics 'basket' or 'common fund' to which all donors in statistics contribute.
  - Including statistics in Joint Assistance Strategies.

  Detailed evidence from case studies is found in the supporting evidence reports. The full draft evaluation framework is set out in Section 5.

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Abbreviations

ADB	African Development Bank
AFRISTAT	Observatoire économique et statistique d'Afrique Subsaharienne
AIDS	Auto-Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CASD	Coordinating Committee on African Statistical Development
CESD	Centre Européen de Statisticiens-économistes des pays en voie de Développement
CFA	Coopération financière en Afrique centrale
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CPI	Consumer Price Index
CSO	Central Statistical Office
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DfID	Department for International Development
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
DQAF	Data Quality Assessment Framework
EASTC	Eastern Africa Statistical Training Centre
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EU	European Union
GDDS	General Data Dissemination System
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GSO	General Statistics Office
IDA	International Development Association
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INSEE	Institut National de la Statistique et des Études Économiques
IT	Information Technology
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
LSMS	Living Standards Measurement Survey
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAPS	Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MICS	Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey
MIS	Management Information System
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NSDS	National Statistical Development Strategy
NSO	National Statistical Office
NSS	National Statistical Strategy
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PARIS21	Parternships in Statistics in the 21st Century
PARSTAT	Programme d'appui regional à la statistique
PD	Paris Declaration
PRISM	Performance Reporting Information Systems Management
PROSMIC	Common Minimum Statistical Programme
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
REC	Regional Economic Community
RRSF	The Reference Regional Strategic Framework For Statistical Capacity Building In Africa: Better Statistics For Improved Development Outcomes
RTAC	Regional Technical Assistance Centre
SADC	South African Development Community
SCB	Statistical Capacity Building
SDDC	Special Data Dissemination Standard
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SWAp	Sector Wide Approach
TA	Technical Assistance
UEMOA	West African Economic and Monetary Union
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation

1 Introduction: the Paris Declaration and Support to Statistical Capacity Building

1.1 Objectives and Justifications for the Study

This study aims to answer this overarching question:

> *"What development partner approaches to statistical capacity building have been most effective in different circumstances and why?"* (Terms of Reference paragraph 12).

The study is principally motivated by two related processes in the development field. The first process is the increasing emphasis amongst many donors and recipient countries on the role of reliable statistics "to make policy, measure progress and report on development results at international, national and local levels[13]" In development, like most other fields of economic and political life, statistics assume steadily greater importance as globalisation and the scale of many undertakings grow[14]. The impact of "weak statistical capacity… on the development process and aid effectiveness is well documented[15]". Resources devoted to production of statistics in developing countries have increased substantially, and probably faster in the last decade than earlier. As Official Development Assistance (ODA) is scaled up, both demand for reliable statistics and resources allocated to statistics will grow further. However, recognition of shortfalls from what might be desirable in terms of improvements in statistical capacity has also grown and spread. The most recent evaluation of the implementation of the Paris Declaration (July 2008) found that "Among the five commitments, almost all the evaluations find that relatively little progress is being reported on implementation of the commitments on 'managing for development results' in comparison with issues of alignment, harmonisation, or ownership". Official statistics are one of the major ways in which results can be measured, therefore effective capacity building for statistics is at the heart of the results agenda.

To understand why this is the case much more evidence is needed. Evidence on the effectiveness of support to statistical capacity building is rather poor. There is considerable variety amongst national statistical systems and amongst the forms of support that donors have provided to them. The Terms of Reference for this study are clear: "Although there have been a number of reviews carried out by development partners relating to support to statistical capacity building (SCB) and the strengthening of national statistical strategies, there is no clear evidence of what works and what does not. A review of models of technical assistance for statistical development (Edmunds 2005) concluded "the evidence to date is sparse; it does not appear to favour one approach for delivering technical assistance over another. Indeed the evidence in some areas is conflicting[16]". Despite some good evaluations of particular programmes, "country level evidence of what works and what does not is very limited indeed. Reviews conducted by development partners tend to be limited to their own work. There is virtually no evidence which compares different modalities in different country situations[17]."
The combination of this recognition and of likely scaling up provides an urgent motivation for an analysis of support to statistical capacity building.

The second (and related) process is the recent reflection and rethinking on development aid, promoted notably by some of the leading aid agencies, multilateral as well as bilateral, and their critics, from privately funded aid institutions, academia, and think tanks and parliaments of both developing and OECD countries. The most important themes that emerged from these debates were summarized in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness that was agreed at a large meeting in February 2005 of ministers concerned with development from both OECD and developing countries and aid agency heads. The Paris Declaration expressed broad agreements on the

13 Terms of Reference, paragraph 1.

14 High Level Forum 28 February – 2 March 2005 'Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness' OECD. Para. 3 Scale up for more effective aid.

15 Terms of Reference, paragraph 1

16 Terms of Reference, paragraph 6

17 Terms of Reference, paragraph 7

improvements that should be sought, commitments as to how they should be fostered by governments and aid agencies, and on some topics quite specific targets for achievement by 2010 have been set. The essence of the Declaration lies in the five key principles agreed, from which most of the more detailed commitments were derived. These principles are:

- **Ownership**: developing countries will strongly lead their own chosen development strategies, and donor countries will help them to do so.
- **Alignment**: developing countries will prioritise capacity development, including for financial management and efficient procurement, and donor countries will align their efforts on the institutions and systems chosen.
- **Harmonisation**: donor countries will harmonise and simplify their procedures for the provision of development aid, to make them less burdensome (especially for countries in fragile situations) and aid supply more efficient.
- Managing for results: donor countries will work with developing countries, emphasizing results indicators chosen by the latter, to strengthen capacities for results-based decision-making.
- **Mutual accountability**: developing and donor countries alike seek to strengthen transparency and accountability to the public in their use of development resources.

These themes were developed through a series of meetings and plans that included the Marrakech and Hanoi Roundtables on Managing for Development Results (February 2004 and February 2007) and the Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics (MAPS). These roundtables "identified inadequate investment in statistics as a key constraint on managing for better development results [and] agreed that reliable and timely statistics are essential for improving development results and aid effectiveness".

Progress in improving aid effectiveness was discussed by heads of governments, development agencies, donor organisations, and civil society organisations at the Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Accra in September 2008.[18] An evaluation of the Paris Declaration was conducted to inform this High Level Forum. Given the particular emphasis placed on managing for results and statistics in the ongoing discussions on aid effectiveness, statistical capacity building was an important part of the evaluation process; and a briefing paper was made available at Accra[19]. The major issues relate to a) whether the Paris Declaration principles have improved support to statistical capacity building; and b) what implications the changing approaches to aid delivery have for statistics.

Deeper assessment of statistical capacities built, from the point of view of statistical institutions' effectiveness in contributing to policy formulation, has been undertaken in several recent studies[20] relating more to Paris Declaration themes and the monitoring of country-led programmes than to evaluation of completed aid projects. An important and difficult task of the last six or seven years in many countries has been to bring about collaborations among different national institutions sufficient to support adequate monitoring of the implementation of poverty reduction strategies. Reporting on poverty and social welfare needed to be better linked with improved administrative data on what services government bodies were actually delivering and what they were costing (OECD 2008).

This was a key thrust in the direction of results-based management of public services. Among the institutions involved, national statistical offices were generally considered best prepared for the roles they needed to play, and they have indeed contributed. But the progress has been very slow in most countries (for the interesting case of Mali, for example, see Fritz and Lang 2007). Even in Uganda, a leader in the field, much work was required to cut back on over-elaborate administrative data collections and to bring the new objectives to fruition (Bedi et al. 2006 and Mackay 2006).

Other trends in the management of aid since the middle 1990s have also enhanced the role of statistics. Efforts spread in that decade to put aid to the health and education sectors in particular on a sector-wide (SWAp) basis. This tended immediately to increase the need for statistics about the attainments of different parts of the population in these fields and the services available to them. SWAps did help bring about larger benefits from resources spent, but in most countries only after significant additional effort to improve the quality of the administrative data normally gathered by the sector ministry and to link it with accurate detailed information about planned and actual spending on services provided.

The terms of reference for this study therefore stipulate two objectives:

- "To develop a framework that can evaluate different types of statistical interventions in different country contexts.
- To document existing evidence regarding what type of support to statistical capacity building is most effective and sustainable, to feed into the High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Accra."[21]

1.2 Methodological Approach

Initial discussions over the study's methodological approach were held in consultation with the study's specially constituted Board, with inputs from the MAPS reference group.[22]

18 See http://www.accrahlf.net/ for details.

19 DFID (2008) 'Improving the Effectiveness of Support to Statistics'. Briefing paper for the Evaluation of the Implementation of the Paris Declaration'. DFID on behalf of the Paris Declaratioon on Aid Effectiveness Evaluation. August 2008.

20 OECD (2008) 'Evaluation of the Implementation of the Paris Declaration' July 2008 http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/19/9/40888983.pdf

21 Terms of Reference paragraph 10. In fact, the report was not discussed at Accra; but the Briefing paper referred to above footnote 18, was made available.

22 The study's Board is chaired by Professor Ben Kiregyera of UNECA, and its members are: Mats Alentun replaced by Lars Johansson(Sida); Pietro Gennari (UNESCAP); Charles Lufumpa (AfDB); Lynn Macdonald (DFID); Saraswathi Menon (UNDP); and Antoine Simonpietri (PARIS21).

Here, the methodological approach is decomposed into the activities undertaken and the conceptual framework.

1.3 Activities

It was agreed that the study would take place between February and May 2008 and activities would include:

- A literature review.
- Three recipient country case studies involving 5 days fieldwork interviewing stakeholders in the countries selected: Zambia, Niger and Cambodia. These stakeholders had opportunities to review and fact check draft reports on their country.
- Two donor organisation case studies of the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) and the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID). The Sida study involved a visit to Sida headquarters and to Statistics Sweden in Stockholm; the DFID study involved interviews in East Kilbride and London, telephone interviews and a review of project documentation on the PRISM records system. Interviewees had an opportunity to review and fact check reports.
- Five limited study countries (Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Liberia, Rwanda, and Tanzania), for which information was obtained through PARIS21, literature reviews and desk-based interviews with knowledgeable informants[23].

Development of a framework for evaluation of efforts, whether past or future, to assist the growth of developing countries' statistical services has to take advantage of three groups of recent literature. One is the large amount of work, especially in the last ten years, reviewing broadly the experience of aid and seeking improvement in its management and results. Second is an accumulation, gradually growing since the 1980s, of assessments focusing specifically on interventions in support of statistics. Third is the generally much more recent work on experience in the development of macroeconomic and sectoral monitoring and evaluation in connection with human resource programmes and poverty reduction strategies. This last group is additionally important because it is hard to trace individual project evaluations that give thorough attention to statistical components that accounted for only small parts of the financing provided.

For purposes of this paper, we have concentrated on the broader strategic dimensions of the Paris Declaration rather than the more detailed project-level issues such as choice among different forms of technical assistance for statistics (Edmunds 2005) or recruitment and contracting arrangements for technical assistance (ECDPM 2007 and Land 2007) which are also important aspects of the new thinking. We have focused attention principally toward the needs of IDA countries, and especially those in Africa.

In the field of evaluations our main effort has been to gather ex post assessments, whether by project supervisors and managers or independent evaluators, of projects or programmes aimed at helping build statistical capacities in developing countries. The older studies found are principally by Scandinavian authors, assessing the experience of their national statistical institutes in projects to enable a developing-country institute to add a new major survey to its repertoire or, as more often in later years, to strengthen the partner institute much more broadly. A few studies were also available on Francophone statistical training institutes and, more recently, the work of AFRISTAT.

The most recent studies found are principally reviews of several types of funding by the IMF, examined through country cases of the substantial technical assistance it has provided for statistics; and evaluations by an independent contractor of a large sample of the statistics projects assisted by EU aid in the decade 1996-2005. JICA has also been publishing on its web-site end-of-project assessments of assistance for statistics of increasing depth and interest.

Fieldwork activities were scheduled successively such that each case study would contribute to the continued refinement of the proposed evaluative framework and provide further evidence on successful and unsuccessful approaches to support in different contexts.[24] Individual reports were prepared on each of the five fieldwork activities (Zambia, Niger, Cambodia, DFID, and Sida).

The selection of case study countries and organisations was made on the basis of willingness to participate; geographical representation (Francophone Africa, Anglophone Africa; Asia); and perceived performance of statistical systems and support. This selection process was constrained by time and resources and is clearly not ideal. First, large and important regions (Latin America, Europe, Central Asia) are omitted. While there are clearly important benefits in terms of comprehensiveness and potential application to retaining a broad geographical scope, it was agreed that this particular study be limited to International Development Association (IDA) countries, but that the scope would be broadened in Phase 2. Second, given the difficulties both of assessing the performance of statistical systems and changes over time (see below), and of assessing ex ante the adherence to Paris Declaration principles in particular countries, it was not possible to select case studies on a rigorous basis of 'success' and 'failure' of Paris Declaration support to statistics.

The study examines support between 1992 and 2008. The long timeframe facilitates the examination of capacity building—by nature typically a long-term process. However, documentation for earlier projects is not always available, and individuals involved have frequently moved employment, so the analysis of this earlier support is usually based on less

23 In addition, some telephone interviews were made with the GDDS coordinator, a meeting took place with INSEE and calls were made to the World Bank to check matters of fact and obtain information from databases.

24 It should be noted that, due to time constraints, the Zambia case study was undertaken before the final meeting with the Board at which the methodological approach was finalised.

evidence. The long-term nature of capacity building processes also limits the likely differences visible as a result of the Paris Declaration in 2005. The study attempts a before/after analysis, but since visible changes are limited, the Paris Declaration principles are used to expose weaknesses in support to statistical capacity building and to provide suggestions for improving support.

This study cannot be considered, nor was intended to be, a rigorous evaluation of support to statistical capacity building worldwide, and the inferences which can be drawn from 5 case studies and a number of light touch studies is limited. Instead, the study provides a draft framework for evaluating support to statistical capacity building, and indications of the sorts of support that are successful in different circumstances.

1.4 Building the Framework

The draft evaluation framework and the eight pillars of capacity building were developed deductively by examining the evidence collected at the latter stages of the study. The evaluators considered examples where statistical reform processes had been assessed as successful by the majority of stakeholders interviewed, and from other studies or evaluations. The two most successful cases of reform examined were Niger and Tanzania. Other capacity building support programmes were successful to a lesser degree, although the authors would like to avoid ranking countries further in this respect. The conclusions raised questions about what factors were in place for the more successful capacity building programmes as opposed to those that were less so from the point of view of the stakeholders. Issues of building accountability to governments and users, strong links to the results agenda and strong management capabilities where markedly positive especially where support was given in a way that met Paris Declaration Principles. For countries emerging from conflict an additional factor was availability of trained personnel. By adding and subtracting factors, which became pillars, the team was able to isolate the pillars of successful capacity building.

The evaluation questions that were used in the case studies were then incorporated under the pillars and linked to the DAC evaluation criteria and the Paris Declaration principles. The draft framework can be found in Chapter 5.

1.5 Conceptual Context

Although one of the study's objectives is to develop a draft conceptual framework for evaluating support to statistical capacity building, two components of a conceptual framework were agreed at the outset.

1.5.1 Statistical system

First, the study would take a broad view of statistical capacity. The measurement of statistical capacity is complex and difficult, but the concept would be taken initially to refer to the production of official statistics by government institutions, and their use. This excludes statistics produced outside the government, but does not exclude the use of statistics by country institutions or citizens outside the government.

Figure 1.1 depicts the general view of statistics in this study. Statistical producers are the Central Statistical Office[25], the Central Bank, Ministry of Finance and line ministries (of which only Education, Health, and Agriculture are represented in this diagram). All of these institutions may of course also have provincial and district units.

Typically, the National Statistical Office (NSO) collects statistics from line ministries to compile a statistical yearbook and perform further analysis or uses the data obtained as an input to its own products. These are most often produced from administrative data (collected through Management Information Systems and usually analysed initially within line ministries), but can include surveys or special activities such as crop forecasting. These administrative data are often combined with population statistics from the CSO to produce statistics expressed as rates (such as enrolment rate). The CSO may provide support to line ministries for their statistical collection or analysis (either in the form of secondments or joint working). The CSO and line ministries also collaborate in the production of surveys or censuses (such as the agricultural census or the Demographic and Health Survey). The National Bank may produce economic and financial statistics (for instance the Balance of Payments statistics), although some of these may be produced by the CSO.

The CSO usually produces the population census, various economic series (such as National Accounts, trade statistics or the Consumer Price Index), compiled line ministry data, and various household surveys. Often, the CSO is responsible for the collection, analysis, and dissemination of these statistics, although parts of the production process are often outsourced to private companies. The CSO may also quality assure and designate all official statistics. It may also coordinate the statistical system. The functions of the CSO are almost always supported by legislation (such that individuals or organisations are required to provide information to the CSO). However, many statistical production functions may be undertaken by other organisations or companies, and there is often no clear agreement over which core functions the CSO should undertake, and which can be carried out elsewhere.

Almost all institutions within government have some use for statistics, depending on the extent to which decisions are based on data and analysis. Line ministries use statistics from their own Management Information Systems, often combined with (e.g. population data to generate enrolment rates) or checked by (as in survey estimates of enrolment) statistics from the CSO. The National Bank and the Ministry of Finance use economic statistics from the CSO or the Bank. The Ministry of Finance, the ministry responsible for planning, the Cabinet, the Presidential and/or Prime Ministerial Office, and Parliament will use a range of survey, census and administrative statistics.

25 Or National Institute, or Bureau.

Outside government, private individuals, companies, and organisations within and outside the country will use a range of statistics produced by the government. Donor organisations and international agencies will also use a range of statistics, and the international community and regional organisations also use various government produced statistics.

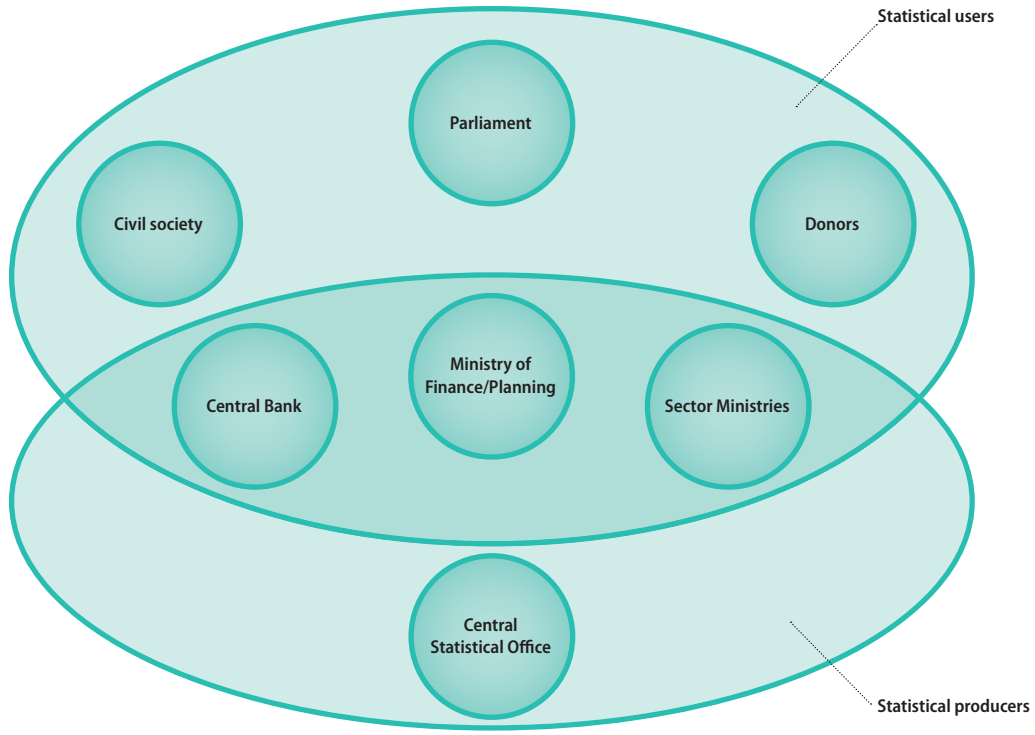
It is becoming increasingly common to view all the government entities of statistical production and sometimes the users too, as a National Statistical System (NSS)26. In some cases, the NSS is coordinated strongly by the CSO, a Statistics Council, or a key ministry, such as the Ministry of Finance. In others, it is decentralised. In some cases, the CSO and/or all statisticians are independent of the general civil service. In others, statisticians are normal civil servants and/or the CSO is a department in a Ministry.

Increasingly, the institution responsible for the statistical system produces a strategy for statistical development or a statistical master plan. The Terms of Reference (paragraph 14) ask a set of questions around this. "Which countries have national statistical planning tools (NSDS, statistics master plan, corporate plan etc)? How are they used? Do they have budgets? Are their budgets linked to national budgets and do they include funding requirements, or funding allocations? Are they Government owned? Are they being implemented? What value is placed on national statistical planning tools?"

There are usually many different donors providing support to every national statistical system, and a single donor often provides several different supports from different parts of its organisation (e.g. from a health programme, a democracy and governance programme, or a specific fund). Donors provide support to various parts of this statistical system. They often support the CSO directly for a range of statistical production or coordination functions. They may also support line ministries through sector projects or Sector Wide Approaches (SWAps), of which part goes to supporting line ministry statistical production or use. They may also support key decision-makers in the Ministry of Finance and other government institutions to analyse and use statistics. Donors often support civil society organisations to analyse statistics and use them to affect government policy. They also support regional or global organisations to promote or coordinate statistics. These different areas of support are given in a wide range of modalities, including providing resources of various kinds, technical assistance of various kinds, and training of various kinds.

This study will provide and analyse evidence on these different approaches, as required in the Terms of Reference paragraph 13(a), which asks "What type of approaches to SCB are used in different country contexts?" A second specific question in the Terms of Reference asks "Which approaches are most valued by partner countries and development partners, and why?" (paragraph 13(b)). Third, paragraph 14 asks for a global picture of different modalities of support to statistical capacity building. Finally, paragraph 14 also asks "Is development partner support harmonised in the statistical sector?" The diversity of both sources of support (different agencies, different programmes within agencies) and recipients of support (producers and users across the statistical system) increases the challenge of harmonising.

Figure 1.1 A Statistical System



26 Sometimes including civil society where it interacts with government.

1.5.2 Evaluation Criteria

The second component of the conceptual framework with which the study started is the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Evaluation criteria, [27] which would be used to evaluate support to statistical capacity building. These criteria will be applied to answer the overarching question on which approaches to support to statistical capacity building are most effective, and the sub-question[28] asking "what is the relationship between approaches taken and improved performance?" The criteria are:

- Relevance. This is "The extent to which the aid activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient and donor." Key questions asked:
  - whether the objectives of the support are valid
  - whether programme activities and outputs are consistent with the overall goal and objectives
  - whether programme activities and outputs are consistent with the intended impacts and effects
- Effectiveness. This is "a measure of the extent to which an aid activity attains its objectives." Key questions asked:
  - to what extent objectives were achieved
  - what were the major factors influencing the achievement/non-achievement of objectives
- Efficiency. This measures outputs in relation to inputs. Key questions asked:
  - whether activities were cost-efficient,
  - whether objectives were achieved on time, and
  - whether the programme was implemented efficiently compared to possible alternatives.
- Impact. This refers to positive and negative, intended and unintended, changes produced by the intervention.
- Sustainability. This reflects whether the effects of support are felt after donor funding is withdrawn.

Analysis of these factors, taking account of the wider political context, permit a response to paragraph 14 that asks "What factors (e.g. governance, political, donor support) lead to capacity development of statistical systems? What do stakeholders perceive as the most important contributing factors?"

1.5.3 Statistical capacity

Central to the draft evaluation framework will be a definition of statistical capacity and tools for measuring it. Here, statistical capacity is a property of the statistical system, including both producers and users. The Terms of Reference (paragraph 14) ask for an assessment of "What does statistical capacity look like to different stakeholders? What do different development partners and country partners define as or perceive as improved statistical capacity building?" These questions will be addressed and a precise concept of statistical capacity will be developed later in the report, but it will revolve around the relevance, timeliness, and quality of statistics produced, and the extent to which they are used. Currently, the principal indicator of statistical capacity is the World Bank Statistical Capacity Indicator.[29] The suitability of this indicator will be tested in the study.

1.6 Study Outputs

There are two outputs to this study. This synthesis report and the report on the evidence gathered in the five case studies and the supporting evidence from the limited study countries.

This report is structured as follows.

Section 2 examines support in relation to the changing aid architecture, and particularly the changes related to the Paris Declaration. Typically, Paris Declaration principles are not well observed in support to statistical capacity building. In many instances, this significantly reduces the success of the support. It is suggested that ownership is critical to successful support. Donor harmonisation is also of crucial importance to assist in the development of systemic capacity. Despite this evidence on the importance of these principles, the study also finds that there have been relatively few changes to support to statistical capacity building as a result of the Paris Declaration itself, which may be unsurprising given that the Declaration was signed only 3 years ago. Organisations driving the Paris Declaration process already tended to adhere more to its principles; other organisations' behaviour has not yet changed substantially.

Section 3 assesses existing support to statistical capacity building using the DAC evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. It is suggested that support is broadly relevant but tends to focus narrowly on technical skills in the central statistical agency and survey outputs. This leads to improvements in data production, but the section suggests that the narrow focus is to the detriment of effective and sustainable overall capacity development in statistics. In general, there are concerns about the efficiency and sustainability of support to statistical capacity building.

Section 4 describes the development of the draft evaluative framework for support to statistical capacity building. It provides an overview of support to statistics. Drawing from the literature review and the fieldwork, it builds on the insight that resources for statistics have increased without commensurate increases in national statistical performance. Eight necessary conditions for good statistical performance are identified, and it is suggested that the effect of support for statistical capacity will be constrained by the absence of these conditions. These are: appropriate methods and tools; qualified and trained staff; good management; resources; a realistic strategy; an appropriate institutional environment; accountability to government, and a results-focus at the top of government. These factors emerged from research in the study that focused exclusively on statistics; but it is no surprise that they reflect general con-

27 http://www.oecd.org/document/22/0,2340, en_2649_34435_2086550_1_1_1_1,00.html, accessed March 2008.

28 Terms of Reference paragraph 13(c)

29 http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/DATASTATISTICS/0,,contentMDK:21021236~menuPK:1192714~pagePK:64133150~piPK:64133175~theSitePK:239419,00.html

ditions for successful capacity building in other sectors. When these conditions are in place, one would expect an improvement in statistical capacity[30].

Section 5 sets out the full draft evaluation framework for support to statistics, based on the insights in section 4.

Section 6 uses this draft framework to analyse different forms of support to statistical capacity building, covering technical assistance, support to surveys, twinning, regional initiatives, and countries in fragile situations.

Section 7 then sets out further evidence required from phase 2 of this study. This would primarily include the further development of this draft evaluation framework. The section specifically calls for the development of benchmarks for each of the pillars, for an investigation of comparative costs of different data collection method, for further analysis of capacity constraints and for a better understanding of which users need what type of data.

Section 8 makes recommendations for support to statistical capacity building on the basis of this study. The inclusion of statistics in Joint Assistance Strategies is needed to ensure that Paris Declaration principles are observed. Other recommendations include a stronger focus of support on the upper pillars of the framework: these are the results focus of government, the accountability of statistical offices, the institutional environment and the governance of statistics. Specifically more support is recommended to address capacity bottlenecks, and training programmes in order to maintain the supply of statisticians in developing countries against growing demand from governments, the donor and NGO communities. Much more focus is needed on getting statistical results used in policy processes and in harmonising statistical supply with the policy cycles in the country.

30 As defined in 1.5.3

2 Support to Statistical Capacity Building and the Paris Declaration

2.1 Overview

This section examines the relationship of support to statistical capacity building to the Paris Declaration principles, drawing out major issues and conclusions. Of the eight countries studied the number of donors involved in supporting capacity ranged from just three in Bangladesh, seven in Liberia, to around 10–14 in the other country examples during the time period from 2001 to 2007. Despite the large number of donors supporting statistics, there was very little evidence of support being delivered in ways that met Paris Declaration principles. Some more recent examples of support to statistics funds fit more closely with best practice, while the Poverty Monitoring Fund in Tanzania was the only example of longer-term support that closely matched the principles. Even in this example only six of the 14 donors involved were fully aligned and acting in harmony in supporting statistics, although the National Bureau of Statistics took steps of its own to coordinate and align support[31]. Statistics was not treated as a sector in any of the countries examined, and was largely ignored in joint assistance strategies leaving it outside the alignment and harmonisation processes currently occurring in country.

The most common form of support given to statistical capacity building was of an *ad hoc* nature with very little alignment with country strategies, and even where strategies existed there was evidence of support being both offered and accepted by statistical agencies outside the strategy[32]. However most strategies were broad enough to include most types of support likely to be offered by external partners, which allowed cooperating partners to take an á la carte approach to strategies, leaving some country priorities unsupported. In most countries the prioritisation process was funding led - whatever was funded was done[33]. This points to risks in any scaling up of support to the statistics sector; trained human resources are a real constraint in most statistical offices. The 2008 Review of the GDDS by IMF noted that "constraints to the effective TA provision has been another issue contributing to the need to merge statistical and development strategies". In general LICs lack resources (financial, IT and skilled manpower) to design and implement statistical reforms[34]. Several of the case study countries suffered constraints[35]. Simply providing additional funds is likely to overstretch their human and management capacities. Much more careful prioritisation is required which matches information needs with the available capacity in statistical agencies and units in line ministries. Support to statistics has to go beyond sponsoring surveys – which has been a large component of support - to include support to organisational reform to expand the underlying capacity of statistics offices, and the system for utilising the results effectively.

Some of the support offered to date seemed to be directed more towards delivering statistical outputs than to specifically overcoming capacity obstacles in the statistical system. Obvious examples of this were support given to some of the specialist surveys sponsored by external partners. Some skills were transferred and all the case study countries had developed strong capabilities in the conduct of household surveys although analytical skills were weak. The tendency to equate capacity with the availability of statistical outputs is dangerous, because it leads both countries and partners towards a focus on increasing outputs regardless of quality, rather than on improving the organisational and institutional capacity and removing bottlenecks. Support needs to go beyond transferring skills to individuals and must involve reform and support of organisations to improve their performance to both produce and use statistics.

There is no very good reason why all support to the results agenda has always to be linked to government capacity building. Capacity is only built slowly, even in the most conducive

31 Part II Tanzania 97

32 Part I Cambodia 138-142; Part II Burkina Faso149; Rwanda 44; Tanzania 64.

33 Part II Burkina Faso 128

34 Kibuka (2007) Page 19

35 Part I Cambodia 85; Rwanda 14.

environments. It would be worth considering whether there should be separate and different treatment of support that aims to raise country capacity to produce, manage and use statistics—which has a long time horizon—and that which is given to increase, as an urgent and immediate need, the volume results available in countries. Both types of activity are linked, and capacity is raised in both, but the first depends crucially on the statistical results environment and how hostile or friendly it is assessed to be. This is a particular issue in countries in fragile situations, which will be explored in section 6.

Among the major challenges ahead is not only how to supply the support to statistics, but how to increase capacity of countries to be able to absorb and use the aid received, and how to integrate the results into the development agenda in country. There needs to be a very clear view of what capacities are the core business of government statistical agencies—and this will vary greatly from country to country—and what else is required and for whom.

A critical question relates to what spare capacity exists now to extend beyond that core country owned agenda and what capacities should be built to extend capacity both within and beyond government agencies. This capacity is much more than the availability of financial resources. The global debate around the Paris Declaration is currently extending to building capacity beyond government agencies, and to include country based support to institutes; this may be directly relevant to increasing the extent to which analysis and use of statistics is carried out within the countries. We found little evidence of support to statistics extending beyond their production and dissemination, and much of the analysis and interpretation of statistics is still carried out by external partners, often in donor capitals.

2.2 Ownership of Statistics

The issue of ownership of the development agenda is a serious one in statistics. The users of statistics are both within and outside the country, with the donors themselves being major users. Statistics are used for example, to inform taxpayers of progress, to monitor the results agenda in countries, and to design appropriate country support. The vital questions for statistics are: who are their owners, and who should be responsible for setting and agreeing priorities? The evidence suggests that the needs of governments and citizens may be rather different from those of the international community[36], although many needs overlap particularly those for monitoring the MDGs and PRSPs. The Evaluation of the Commission Support for Statistics in this case notes "As a result improvements in statistics may have been generated in areas that were not national policy priorities[37]". The study also suggests that most developing countries are at the limit of their capacities[38] but new demands are appearing over the horizon and with the prospect of scaling-up both in statistics and in aid generally the demands are likely to grow significantly.

Statistical capacity is defined as the extent to which a country can provide to a variety of different user groups; how far official statistical services are adequate in quantity and quality to support efficient functioning of the society and achievement of the desired pace of economic and social progress; and the ability of those national groups to use statistics. Different political philosophies would rank the various user groups and purposes in different orders of priority. It will be vital for future work to explore in greater depth what the actual needs of those groups are in the country concerned, where the needs overlap, how they can be prioritised and who should finally agree those priorities. Clearly the policy needs of government would be a very major driver and the ownership philosophy outlined in the Paris Declaration would seem to imply the following approximate ranking:

i. To facilitate design and adoption of government policy measures responsive to the evolving needs of the country and its economy,
ii. To enable programme and policy objectives to be expressed in the form of explicit time-bound output (and sometimes outcome) targets that can significantly improve the performance of public services (as, e.g., in performance-based budgeting),
iii. To allocate resources geographically,
iv. To improve the flow of information to citizens throughout the country and hence enable them to make sounder business and family decisions,
v. To stimulate and feed democratic debate on issues of public policy and enable the government in office to give account to the electorate for its initiatives and performance,
vi. To help meet the information needs of potential foreign investors and visitors to the country (including press and other intermediary agencies serving them),
vii. To fulfil accountability and fiduciary responsibilities to foreign governments and international institutions for any assistance they have provided,
viii. To provide accurate reports to bodies that have been charged by the international community with the task of keeping track of world performance on many economic, environmental, social and other issues.

Since capacity reflects the ability of a statistical system to satisfy the needs of these users, changes in these needs are important parts of supplying support: statistical need is a dynamic concept which will change with economic and political developments. Over the period considered by the study it is apparent that demand for statistics, at home and abroad, has increased significantly. The Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have been major drivers of statistical demand, as has the growing needs of monitoring systems and evaluation activities, related to the results agenda. The debate around the 'missing middle'

36 Part I Zambia para 85; Cambodia 97; Niger 114; Part II Burkina Faso 148.

37 ADE (2007) Volume I page iii

38 Part I Cambodia 84. Rwanda 14, 47 – but no real study of individual work loads in statistical agencies has been found.

in monitoring systems (Booth and Lucas 2002; Lucas et al 2004; Booth 2005; Kibuka 2007) in recent work has stimulated a new demand for regular information from routine systems that can provide information quickly and at lower tiers of government.

Similarly external partners need statistics to monitor their own performance and account to their tax payers and citizens[39].

Demand is likely to increase in future. The Paris Declaration's focus on managing by results and mutual accountability will also tend to increase demand for statistics. Furthermore, the importance of national ownership of policies may increase demand in two ways[40]. First, national ownership of policies implies having the research capacity within the country to use results and statistics to inform the development of policies. Second, if aid conditionality shifts from policy-based to performance-based conditionality (in a move intended to increase policy ownership), donors will require statistics on this performance.

It has become increasingly apparent that the limited capacity available is not always directed towards meeting the demands of the national government or its citizens, where demand has typically been very weak. One very early concern of the evaluators was that of ownership of statistics. This very wide range of beneficiaries in-country and abroad poses particular problems in understanding and evaluating the ownership of the capacity building initiatives. All statistics have a use in country, but some have a stronger demand in country than among the international community, and the converse also applies. Because the voice and resources of donors are often the loudest, country priorities can easily be squeezed out of statistical support, and constrained by competing priorities. Evidence from the Zambia study showed lack of support for the economic census needed for the revision of economic statistics. In Niger the Household Budget Survey remained unsupported despite its importance to modernising economic statistics and in Cambodia funding for economic statistics was cut by the ADB [41].

Those countries (Tanzania and more recently Rwanda) which have strong governance of their statistical systems have managed, to some extent, to contain the demands of partners and protect key country needs, but this was relatively rare in the countries examined. In Liberia where the donor support has been restrained and capacity very obviously limited, support seems to have been well focused on the Road Map, perhaps because of the very strong donor collaboration in a post-conflict situation[42]. Rising demands from many of the user groups[43], even if still much below what some would consider their needs, have made it difficult for managers of statistical services to maintain a good balance in provision. In the case study countries, economic statistics have suffered to some extent in quality and timeliness over the last decade as a result of new recognition of the need to improve coverage of the social services and status of the population.

Increases in demand for statistics imply more inputs to capacity building will be required – and this requires an analytical approach to showing where capacity has been insufficient to meet demand. This must go beyond the financial need to include human resources and management capabilities. The growing demand for statistics has met with capacity constraints in the countries studied[44]. In states recovering from war and crisis, the capacity constraints are most strongly felt, and in Cambodia the increase in qualified statisticians from its post war base of zero to its current complement is a significant factor in the recovery of the statistical system.

2.3 Alignment around Statistical Strategies

Without a realistic strategy – in terms of the capabilities of the statistical agencies and offices - and strong donor coordination mechanisms around it, the evidence shows that cooperating partners will tend to undermine one another, duplicate activities, overstretch limited capacity in the statistical agency[45] and tend to drown out the statistical needs of the country.

Considerable support has been given to developing National Statistical Development Strategies following the agreement of the Marrakech Plan of Action (MAPS)[46] in 2004. Of the countries studied, Niger, Cambodia, Rwanda and Burkina Faso had statistical strategies or plans. Tanzania had its own work plan linked to a poverty monitoring master plan which was directly linked to the information priorities of the policy process.

Zambia was in the process of developing a new strategy, although a statistical master plan for the CSO was produced a few years earlier in 2003. Despite the Plan having been signed by President Levy Mwanawasa, it seems not to have been widely owned or acted on[47]. We understand that this was due to several factors, partly the omission of the wider statistical system from the plan but also concerns of the Government about the proposal to move the CSO to agency status. Zambia's experience to date suggested that agencies had not always performed well. Liberia was also in the process of developing an NSDS and had worked to a Road Map for the last two years while waiting for the plan.

39 Part I DFID 68

40 These points were made at a recent Conference on Ownership in preparation for the High Level Forum at Accra. OECD, May 2008.

41 Part I Cambodia 92; Niger 90, 93, 156; Zambia 84; Part II Tanzania 67 & Table 3.2.

42 Part II Liberia 179

43 Part II Rwanda 10; Tanzania 84

44 Part I Cambodia 38, 117; Rwanda 14, 47

45 Part I Zambia 69.

46 Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics (2004). 'Managing for Development Results. Second Roundtable'.

47 Part I Zambia 109.

Most countries with a plan of some sort, had generally tried to keep to them, but there were many instances of donor interventions that were supplementary to the plan[48], and many other instances (already mentioned above) of plan priorities not being funded[49]. In some cases the plans or strategies were over ambitious, and intended as a marketing tool rather than a clear programme of prioritised actions. This has resulted in several donors selecting á la carte from an extensive list of options in the strategy. The IMF (2008) makes the point that "it is important that resource claims for statistical reforms incorporate prudence and realism. Overly ambitious infrastructural projects and reforms resulted in substantial resource requirements which were not acceptable to the relevant ministries of finance and donors."

Burkina Faso and Rwanda were examples of poor prioritisation[50]. Burkina Faso's NSDS lists five components and their financing sources, but does not indicate any prioritisation. In Rwanda a recently established fund is likely to be overcommitted, largely due to priorities not having been clearly defined and agreed between external partners and government. However their Statistics Fund Committee, includes the contributing donors and representation from The Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning. This committee was able to identify the funding gap to the attention of the Government and more funds are likely to be provided to meet these priorities from both the country and its development partners.

In some instances alignment to strategies is made more difficult as there were no associated work programmes or schedules of planned outputs. In Burkina Faso, for example, there was no schedule of planned outputs. In Uganda, DFID's project completion report noted an absence of a calendar of products of the Uganda Bureau of Statistics in 2005.[51] Prior to the reforms in 2004, Niger's statistical agencies had no publications calendar.[52] Zambia's Central Statistical Office could not provide the evaluators with a list of publications, past or present. Rwanda's Statistics Fund suffered from a lack of clarity around its work plan.[53]

The strategy forms the focus for **alignment**, but it has to be securely funded and realistic in respect of the countries' capacities to deliver. The element of realism has proved quite difficult to ensure. However, a strong governance mechanism that holds agencies and their managers accountable will lead to more realistic planning approaches over time.

The ownership of statistical strategies, and in particular the setting of priorities within them, needs to be maximised by a process similar to that of the PRSP, with each user ministry drafting its own sectoral chapter, guided by the statisticians, but not written by them. Like the PRSP the views of civil society and the private sector should be carefully canvassed, perhaps by means of a user needs survey. This will ensure that the governments' and other users' priorities are included. A greater integration with planning processes for PRSP, policy and sector monitoring is recommended in future strategy development, with perhaps the governance body for the statistical office taking the lead. This observation is supported by the recent EC evaluation of its support to statistics which speaks of "evidence of statistical interventions being developed in parallel with other cooperation interventions".

The NSDS development process needs to be more closely aligned with PRSP and other policy processes. In almost all the countries studies (with the exception of Tanzania and possibly Liberia) the plan development has been carried out as a parallel technical exercise.

2.4 Harmonisation

Harmonisation was particularly problematic in statistics. The lack of the inclusion of statistics as a sector in Joint Assistance Strategies (JAS) resulted in statistics being neglected in country harmonisation activities[54]. Despite the importance of the results agenda in the strategies the statistics sector itself is not included. This lack of harmonisation and focus on country priorities has led to several problems, many of which detract from the capacity building agenda.

The better examples of harmonisation arise from instances where multi-donor funds supported statistical activities. Even so there were very few examples of donors using country or common accounting and reporting systems. Support to Rwanda had used country systems for several years, and this was extended in the recently agreed fund involving several donors.

2.5 Statistical Funds—Country Based

Among the more successful funding arrangements was the Tanzania Poverty Monitoring Master Plan which provided a strategy and an associated fund around which donors and the Bureau could align. This PRSP related plan, which includes statistics, has formed a very effective alignment tool, with a lead donor chairing the Poverty Monitoring Working Party. This future NSDS needs to preserve this very close link to the policy and monitoring processes in the country.

The fund in Tanzania proved to be a very positive tool for taking a more inclusive approach to the results agenda – linking via a working party the PRSP, the results agenda and the priority needs from the statistical system with assured funding.

In the cases of both Rwanda and Tanzania the governance of the funds established parallel accountability mechanisms to

48 Part I Cambodia para. 138-142; Part II Burkina Faso 129,123,149; Rwanda 44; Tanzania 64

49 Part I Cambodia 92; Niger 90, 93, 156; Zambia 84; Part II Tanzania 67 Table 3.2.

50 Part II Burkina Faso 128; Rwanda 11.

51 Part I DFID 73.

52 Part I Niger 71.

53 Part II Rwanda 25.

54 Part I Zambia 14.

the statistical agencies' own Boards. In Tanzania's case, the error appears to have been not too serious as the fund was part of established government-owned PRSP monitoring processes, and similarly in Rwanda the Government user and parent ministry is represented on the fund committee. However, in the case of Tanzania, the evaluators note that fewer Board reports are publicly available than was previously the case (last one 2004) which may indicate a decline in Board activity in recent years.

2.6 Remote Statistical Funds

Remote funds where the accountable officers were based outside the country, and not part of the continuing country dialogue, were very strongly disliked by both the country authorities and donor representatives in countries where applications had been unsuccessful (Zambia[55]). Examples from Rwanda also uncovered instances of unsatisfactory response to applications. This was because of the lack of responsiveness, the bureaucracy involved and the lack of accountability in country to stakeholders. There are several cases of requests made which seemed to never have been recorded by the fund authorities, and others where the country received no formal response. In the case followed-up[56] the application had been rejected by the Zambia World Bank Country Office and the results not notified to either the fund managers or the country statistical agency, a situation which would have been improved by better dialogue between donors and partners in country.

Where countries had been successful – Niger and Burkina Faso – no complaints were uncovered. In Liberia, the country had simultaneously applied to two external partners without notifying either of this.

2.7 Lead Donors for Statistics

In the countries studied that had joint donor assistance strategies, statistics was not included as a sector. Statistics were identified as important, but not treated as a sector around which donors should **harmonise or align**. Only in the case of Tanzania was a lead donor for monitoring appointed; in Rwanda UNDP took a leadership role around the statistics fund. In Zambia a lead donor was beginning to emerge at the time of the study, but this was not included in the JASZ.

The evaluators discussed the concept of statistical sectors with a number of donor representatives in Cambodia, but the idea was poorly received as few saw statistics as a distinct sector as it is rather cross-cutting, while others had reservations about contributing to a fund[57].

However a lack of harmonisation and alignment leads to an unplanned donor-led focus on priorities for data, and overstretched and poorly performing statistical agencies. It is very difficult to offer proof, but most of the agencies studied seemed to embark on programmes which were beyond their capacities to do well (see para 3), generally too many surveys were planned and too few activities undertaken to improve the use, accessibility or quality of data in the system. Only in Tanzania was there a protected core area of routine statistical work identified while ad hoc interventions by donors were minimised both by the Board of the NBS and the Poverty Monitoring Working parties.

2.8 Managing for Development Results

The Paris Declaration defines this as managing and implementing aid in a way that focuses on the desired results and uses information to improve decision making. It differs from statistical capacity and more is required to ensure that the results of capacity building are utilised in country to improve decision making. The availability of information does not ensure that the data is available at the right time, in the right form, or that the skills exist in country to use it in decision making.

There has been substantial work, particularly since 1997, on the development and application of indicators that pertain to a results orientation. Currently, however, the indicators used by Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics (MAPS) tend to focus on the availability of data and of key indicator information; and on the adherence to international standards for significant series. There is currently less emphasis on the use of information to improve decision making. Moreover, further work is required on adapting these indicators to represent the ability of a national statistical system to respond to data needs on a sustainable basis. Focusing principally on data rather than systems may give misleading weight to statistics produced with significant support from development partners, and this could mask real sustainable country level capacity. Capacity measures must combine data output elements with the acquisition of sustainable skills in country to produce statistics to the quality standards required; and above all for statistics to be actively used in making and monitoring policy, in resource allocation and decision making, and for civil society to hold administrations to account.

Built capacity, as defined above, will not be an easy set of dimensions to measure (see draft evaluation framework på side 76). There is a growing body of work on which to draw (such as the Data Quality Assessment Framework (DQAF); Laliberté 2002; Defays and Laliberté 2006; Edmunds 2005; ADE 2007), and our draft evaluation framework benefits from and attempts to extend these. Despite the difficulties, some process and quality indicators could be included. The study noted that very few countries produced their key poverty surveys in time for the PRSP[58] evaluations or revisions. In expanding the set of indicators, the extent to which data is available and used in policy documents would be a relatively simple measure to introduce, as would the number of qualified statisticians in the statistical system, the bedrock of capacity building.

55 Part I Zambia 136

56 Part 1 Zambia 136

57 Part I Cambodia 145

58 Part I Cambodia 52; Niger 71; Zambia 53, 98, 129

2.9 Mutual Accountability

Mutual accountability has been problematic in the field of support to statistics. Where a number of donors have contributed to censuses or surveys the common complaint from countries is that funds arrive too late[59] which delays the onset of fieldwork that is itself constrained by seasonal factors; and increasing costs by needing to retain or retrain enumerators for longer periods. The complaint from donors is that results are not produced in a timely fashion: rarely is the link between late funding and late results made. In addition, dialogue between statistical agencies and their funders is sometimes weak[60], and tends to be on a bilateral basis[61]. There seemed to be reluctance to enter into a joint, constructive dialogue with the statistical agency on the part of the donors. This was most notable in some of the weaker (as determined by users) statistical systems, and amongst the external partners less inclined to support whole systems (Cambodia). Where the statistical agency seems to be performing poorly, this can provoke a rather combative approach in the local cooperating partners who urgently need results[62].

This principle gives an insight into one of the reasons for the success of reforms in a number of the examples studied, and perhaps explains why other reforms have been less effective. The piecemeal manner in which much of statistical capacity has been supported in the past, has led to multiple accountability mechanisms to individual partners. Where government financial support has been low and donor support high, the statistical agency often lacks adequate oversight from its own country governance systems[63].

A multiplicity of donor projects, each with their own accountability mechanisms, leaves the statistical agency with very weak accountability. Where there are many small projects there is very little an individual donor can do to hold a statistical agency to account—and in the absence of real accountability in country a rather chaotic situation can arise, with the agency taking on too much work and often performing poorly on most accounts. Where there is no strong Board the statistical agency can end up being rather unaccountable for most of its products. The only series that were universally delivered to time in the studies was the CPI[64], (Kibuka 2008 notes 100% compliance with GDDS timeliness recommendations on CPI). The CPI is inevitably a major country statistical need for controlling the money supply and for other prices related policies. Some experts suggest other surveys are lengthy and more complex and require more management input that regular series. But other regular series such as external trade, producer price indexes etc. are not produced on a schedule that meets its timetable as effectively as the CPI. Most statistical managers made it very clear that they were strongly accountable to their ministers for performance in the CPI. It is worth noting here that in Zambia despite this high government priority, donor support to reform and modernisation of the CPI was very slow to emerge[65] although CPI was supported in Liberia by the regional body. It is also worth noting that the CPI is part of the routine day to day work of a central statistics agency, which requires relatively small amounts of support from treasuries. This may be rather a strong sustainability argument for increasing support to routine statistics rather than to very expensive surveys.

In the absence of strong accountability chains, the study shows[66] that agencies may be tempted to take on too much work, and the quality of results may suffer. Where donors are well aligned (Tanzania, Niger) and where there is a knowledgeable local lead donor (Tanzania), and where there is a strong Board (Niger), then discussions will be required to develop a realistic work programme and suitable support.

Even where statistical funds existed (Tanzania and Rwanda) the accountability for performance was to a parallel accountability mechanism; in the case of Rwanda a fund committee, and in Tanzania (which only funded the poverty monitoring component of the statistics programme) to a Poverty Monitoring Committee. We note that the forthcoming EC funding to Burkina Faso intends to provide it to the governance body, rather than to the statistics agency, presumably to strengthen accountability mechanisms.

The parallel fund committees also served a positive purpose, in that partners were brought together to discuss priorities. In the case of Rwanda the committee undermined formal government accountability structures but also brought together partners to identify and fill a funding gap for a government statistical priority. The Paris principles suggest that support should seek to strengthen government reporting structures.

59 Part I Cambodia 151; Niger 101; Zambia 121-122; Part II Burkina 160

60 Part I Zambia 134

61 Part I Cambodia 145; Zambia 111; Part II Bangladesh 232

62 Part I Zambia 134

63 Part I Cambodia 133; Niger 114-115; Zambia (no governance body): Part II Burkina 151

64 Kibuka (2008) 100% of CPI's in African GDDS countries met timeliness guidelines.

65 Part I Zambia 114

66 Part I Zambia 69; Part II Rwanda 24-25

3 Evaluation of Existing Support by DAC Criteria

This section provides a brief assessment of support to statistical capacity building in terms of the DAC evaluation criteria.

3.1 Relevance

The great majority of the evaluations on support to statistical capacity building focus on assessing the projects' success in delivering on what were no doubt the principal direct objectives—carrying out surveys and building capacity to repeat them or, as in the broadest projects, raising standards of quality, frequency and dissemination of statistical output more generally. The study undertaken for the European Commission suggests that the most important weakness of the large EU programme may have been confinement of the projects to these direct production objectives and consequent failure to take the opportunity for statistical 'advocacy' initiatives[67], to interest potential users in the new or better products emerging. Equally, however, for the projects financed from other sources, there are only relatively few cases in which the impact of the statistical work on policy seems to have been considered sufficiently noteworthy to warrant explicit mention.

Limitation of project objectives, whether at design or evaluation stage, largely to production and dissemination of statistics, as opposed to use, risks missing cases of over-expenditure on data collection, in excess of what yields results that are useful. Statistics do not have to lead to changes of policy or management in order to be useful. Sometimes they play an even more vital role in demonstrating that change would probably not be advisable. But the validity of devoting resources to collection of statistics that cannot be shown to play a material role in either direction must be doubted. The point is well put in the EU study's final summation of its findings (ADE 2007, p. 69): "…practically all projects [reviewed] left positive results in the form of broader and deeper coverage of existing information, development of new areas of statistics, increased efforts to disseminate data, use of better methods and software, and adoption of international recommendations and classification systems. ….. However, if one looks at the outcomes and asks the question 'did these results lead to significant improvements in decision-making, and was significant progress observed in the use made of statistical information by the decision-makers?' the answer has to be much more circumspect. Overall, results are substantial but outcomes remain limited."

Fieldwork for this study indicates that the large volume of support has focussed on improving technical skills[68] in the central statistical agency, and in particular in increasing the volume of data emerging, particularly from surveys in the social and demographic sectors. This is not to say that this support was not useful, but alone this support is rather unlikely to improve the overall capacity of countries to produce and use results, more attention has to be paid to the national governmental policy context of the support. The EC evaluation notes that technical improvements made were "fragile and uncertain. The main explanatory factors were (i) absence of real demand for information by decision makers…; (ii) an absence of a clear country partner vision of the development of its statistical systems within the overall architecture of State functions; and (iii) a lack of financial resources and consequently of human resources"[69].

3.2 Effectiveness

This is a measure of the extent to which an aid activity attains its objectives. Support that aimed narrowly to train staff or produce survey data was usually successful in training staff[70] or making survey results available.[71] Undoubtedly more data is available in the public domain. Effectiveness relative to

67 ADE (2007) page iii

68 Part I Sida 67, 77; DFID Tables 1.4 2.1, para 7, 29 (50% on census, small scale support, regional programmes); Niger 87 (73% budget on surveys and census); Part 2 Rwanda 5 (11 surveys in 10 years).

69 ADE (2007) page iii

70 Part I Niger 106; Cambodia 106.

71 Part I Niger 96; Cambodia 205.

more ambitious objectives, such as 'capacity building', is less easy to assess. Are more statistics used in policy cycles, are governments more accountable? The evidence is quite weak in this respect. On a negative note, we noted that the timing of poverty surveys rarely met the needs of the policy cycle,[72] and most PRSP reviews still point to weak underlying statistical systems.

More positively, however, the evaluation suggested that more broadly defined programmes to enhance statistical capacity are very beneficial.[73] In such programmes a much wider range of products is supported, and issues of developing new systems and improving access can be addressed. In particular the governance and institutional bottlenecks to production and use of statistics can be attended to. Even more beneficial is when statistical programmes are tied tightly to policy related programmes as is the case in Tanzania,[74] where users agreed that more data were available, despite large concerns about the lack of capacity in sector ministries.[75]

3.3 Efficiency

Efficiency of support—the relation of inputs to outputs—is typically extremely difficult to measure. One difficulty encountered is the lack of clear evidence of increasing use of statistics in the case study countries. While there are undoubtedly more statistics available, their use in country is difficult to quantify and the opinions of users and PRSP reviews and Joint Staff Assessments are the major sources used.

Perhaps more significantly, there is little, if any, evidence relating to the costs of producing particular series which restricts the findings in relation to efficiency and to the alternatives available. General advocacy, enlivened with concrete illustrations of the significant improvements in decisions that can result from the availability of accurate and up-to-date data, now needs to be supplemented with more information about the costs of different ways of gathering and processing empirical evidence. The problem is not that the overall costs are so large. Available information for a few Asian developing countries in recent years, for example, suggests that total expenditure (including aid funds) on production and processing of official statistics has been around two-tenths of one percent (i.e., 0.2%) of government expenditure, less than 0.04% of GDP (David 2001 and Abbasi 2005). But demand for information has risen relative to budgets and trained staff available, so that hard choices are continuously being made—explicitly or implicitly—as to what will be produced and what will be postponed.

Particular inefficiencies are the poor timeliness of the outputs. This was a common complaint from the users interviewed in this study.[76] The teams view is that the problems relating to timely delivery stem from three problems:

- Lack of accountability—the CPI is very rarely late[77].
- Over-commitment of staff—very ambitious work programmes were noted that would have been very difficult to deliver against.[78]
- Lack of mutual accountability, in particular the lateness of resources promised from some donors and in some cases by governments.[79]

3.4 Impact

The impact of support to statistical capacity building is varied. On the one hand, some support has generated positive externalities in reviving an interest in statistics and in providing information to policy-makers in countries.[80] However, the external cooperating partners may sometimes have been too insistent on statistics or methodologies (Cambodia had no clear owners of food security, accident and injury surveys; demographic projections in Zambia, disproportionate number of health surveys in Zambia; DHS analysis in Niger) of particular interest to their headquarters' researchers and policy planners.

A particularly significant problem for many national statistical systems has been maintenance of an appropriate balance between sample surveys, often financed by interested foreign donors, and the regular collection of administrative information by sector ministries.[81] The uncertain and often poor quality of the latter led to increasing efforts by major UN bodies and some aid agencies since the 1980s to develop and offer sample surveys such as MICS, DHS and LSMS. Such surveys would normally be carried out by the country's main statistical body, following agreed standard procedures and against full donor financing. The results were often highly appreciated by the country's policy circles and researchers, and the international community responsible in one way or another for policy or aid toward the country or sector covered.[82] Initial reports sometimes offered the first high-quality representation of status and trends across the country in the field covered. They sometimes led to major new policy initiatives, such as reinforced agricultural development programmes and special measures to reach groups that had earlier been largely excluded, as in the case of the early living standards surveys in Uganda (underlining greater than expected rural poverty) and in Vietnam (revealing the limited participation of the minority mountain tribes in the rapid uplift of living standards underway).

72 Part I Cambodia 85; Zambia 103.

73 Part I DFID 61, 82.

74 Part II Tanzania 87.

75 Part II Tanzania 85.

76 Part I Cambodia 52, 85; Zambia 53, 103; Part II Liberia 172, Rwanda 6

77 See Kibuka (2007); Part I Zambia 114.

78 Part I DFID 73, Part II Rwanda 25

79 Part I Niger 101, 149. Part II Burkina Faso 160.

80 Part I Cambodia 122, 218; Niger 75; Zambia 159.

81 Part I Cambodia 114, 127; Niger 90, 168; Zambia 151; Sida 92; Part II Tanzania 83.

82 Part I Cambodia 168; Niger 114; Zambia 86.

When stronger emphases on efficiency and results increased the urgency of improving the more continuously available administrative data, a country's national statistical institute, strengthened by its past experience on major surveys, was often best placed to help the responsible sector ministry. But too frequently institute staff were found to be fully occupied with other aid-supported sectoral surveys (Bedi et al., 2006). The problem has been often exacerbated by unfortunate staff incentive structures (including premia for data collection work) that have resulted from aid agencies' preference for supporting specific-purpose surveys rather than providing broader financial assistance to statistics.[83]

3.5 Sustainability

Evidence suggests that *ad hoc*, short term TA interventions are the least sustainable while longer term engagements were the most likely to succeed in passing on skills and sustainable systems[84].

Experiences of negative impact reinforce longstanding fears that statistical capacity building projects tend to be quite successful in the short run, but often disappointing more broadly in most of the poorer countries (see EC evaluation on fragility of capacity as cited above). There are strong indications that projects have typically led to good-quality statistical output and improved capacities of the statisticians and their support services. But too often these gains have not been sustained, people trained have moved on or the training that had been provided proved insufficient to permit updating the computer programme used or adapting it to evolving needs. Concerns about quality and reliability have remained, and endogenous growth of the service has not been ignited.

The most visible cause of the disappointing weakness in sustainability is usually government's budgetary stringencies. Cash-strapped budgeteers could not allow their institutes to pass up the more moneyed demand from overseas. Since the amounts in question are not very great, observers nonetheless often conclude that the underlying reason for the continued weakness is lack of demand for the product due to weak understanding of its utility; as mentioned before almost all governments do make sure of adequate—and very predominantly national—financing for such politically important statistical work as the monthly Consumer Price Index, because it is essential for managing the money supply and other price-related policy activities. Other uses of results may not be as obvious and capacity to use them is rarely supported by statistical capacity building initiatives. While advocacy may be useful, practical support in applying results to decision making may be an even greater need.

One natural response to such a situation is to seek, in return for the help for badly needed improvements, stronger up-front commitments from host governments to sustain the budget of the statistical institute following completion of the aided project (Fellegi & Ryten 2007, ADB 2006, IMF Independent Evaluation Office 2005).

In the case of an intensive and highly successful 10-year (1995–2005) cooperation between Statistics Sweden and the General Statistics Office of Vietnam, Sida's independent evaluation team approached capacity building as a task that cannot be pre-programmed in detail but has to respond to opportunities as they might open up (Stage et al. 2006). The significant advances that were made over the majority of the 10-year period were in fields of statistical technique, with significant positive effects on quality, reliability and timeliness of output, and in information technology, where Sweden added to its project strong capital support.

Statistics Sweden was well aware of what appear to be significant inefficiencies in the Vietnamese statistical system—excessive sample surveys (some of them introduced under the project, in order to improve coverage of households and small private enterprises) in lieu of development of administrative data sources, and very detailed monthly reporting from each of the 64 provincial statistics offices (and 659 District Statistics Bureaux) which is not really needed in a market economy. But its policy was not to try to advise about management and organization matters until a strong base of trust had been created, a stance emphatically endorsed by the evaluation team. That base had developed towards the end of the 10-year project, so that issues of such important nature remained for possible treatment in a follow-on project. However our study suggests that technical skills transfer alone is insufficient and organisational and institutional capacity building is required.

The evaluations of Swedish cases illustrate very serious efforts to apply, in the field of statistics, the conclusions about capacity building that have emerged from extensive work by DAC and others over the last five years. It is now recognized that older approaches to capacity building put excessive reliance on staff training, especially of a technical nature, and the import of institutional models from more developed countries (DAC Network on Governance 2006, World Bank Operations Evaluation Department 2005), and gave too little attention to the broader national context in which the new public-sector capacity was to be built. For that would determine how much effective demand there would be for the services, and where it could expect to find cooperation and support or, on the contrary, resistance to the intrusion of a new body.

83 Part I Cambodia 109; Niger 168; Zambia 112.

84 Part I Cambodia 205, 53; Niger 170, 180. Zambia 91. Part II Burkina Faso 119, 131; Tanzania twinning 57,59-60

4 Developing the Pillars of an Evaluative Framework

4.1 Definitions and Objectives

This section uses the results of the literature review and the fieldwork to develop a draft evaluative framework for support to statistical capacity building. As specified in the Terms of Reference, this framework should be sufficiently 'global' to permit analyses of support at a country level and at a donor organisation level. The succession of case studies in recipient countries and donor organisations was designed to ensure this holism. However, further testing is recommended.

The draft framework is not intended to be a checklist for preparing support to statistical capacity building. Rather, it is intended to provide a conceptual model of the likely impact of support to statistical capacity building that can be applied in different contexts. It is hoped that this model will contribute to the design of support to statistical capacity building by helping to indicate the areas that require support in different contexts. In this sense, it could be considered a guide to investment in statistical capacity building, and could be used as a tool to make a constructive critique prior to project design. This diagnostic tool may well demand that statistical support go beyond its traditional boundaries to incorporate statistics more broadly into public sector reform programmes, monitoring systems development and national development plan processes. This more integrated approach was also recommended by Kibuka (2007) in his review of the IMF's technical assistance[85].

The draft evaluative framework is motivated by the insight, described above, that support to statistics has increased without a ubiquitous sustainable improvement in statistical performance. The evidence suggests that this has been the case across different recipient country contexts and different donor organisations. What do these different contexts and different sorts of support suggest about constraints to improving performance?

The draft framework is composed of 'pillars' of statistical capacity building, under which evaluation questions are linked to the DAC criteria and the Paris Declaration principles. Statistical capacity building is already defined as activities that strengthen the pillars of statistical capacity, while statistical capacity refers to the ability of statistical producers to serve the needs of users with quality statistics, and of users to use statistics in a sustainable manner, and for users to be able to use them.

The draft framework was derived by means of a literature review, and a detailed analysis of the conditions under which the statistical systems of the each of the 8 study countries operated. The framework drew significantly on documented lessons from general capacity building (see e.g. OECD 2006; Oxford Policy Management 2006) and built on elements of statistical capacity identified in specific statistical capacity building studies (e.g. the DQAF; Laliberté 2002; Defays and Laliberté 2006; World Bank 2008).

General capacity building identifies three principal components of capacity on which any framework for assessing capacity must build:

- individual capacity within an organisation (including staff numbers and skills)
- the organisational framework (including organisational structure, management, and modes of thinking)
- the institutional framework (including organisations' mandates, incentives, accountability, and operating rules).

However, three significant elements that are specific to statistics should be highlighted. First, the highly technical nature of statistics means that statisticians are typically in shorter supply and higher demand than staff in many other professions. This impacts strongly on the supply of training.[86] Second, statistics are typically perceived as a global public good, and not only as a national public good (as health, education, or other government services might be). This global nature creates additional

85 Kibuka (2007) page 26

86 Part I Cambodia 166, 179; Niger 108 (reforms have stopped a 'brain drain'); Zambia 100; DFID 53.

incentives for international funding for national statistics, but also (far less than in other sectors) for accountability to international users rather than national users.[87] Third, performance in statistics has proved less important for governments than in health, education or other government functions, and statistics are therefore usually not a priority area for most governments with scarce resources. They are fairly low on the public agenda too. This exacerbates problems of ownership, funding and accountability.

Particularly because of these 'special' features, it is useful to examine approaches to measuring capacity that are specific to statistics. The Data Quality Assessment Framework and the Regional Strategic Framework For Statistical Capacity Building In Africa both provide useful approaches to statistical capacity. This section discusses them briefly in turn.

The IMF developed its Data Quality Assessment framework (DQAF) in 2001, which was revised in 2003 and serves as an umbrella for 7 IMF data specific frameworks for economic and monetary statistics; others for education and poverty have been developed by other international bodies. The DQAF is used for comprehensive assessments of countries' data quality, covers institutional environments, statistical processes, and characteristics of the statistical products.

According to its website, the IMF Data Quality Assessment Framework (DQAF) "identifies quality-related features of governance of statistical systems, statistical processes, and statistical products. It is rooted in the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and grew out of the Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) and General Data Dissemination System (GDDS), the IMF's initiatives on data dissemination. The DQAF incorporates their good practices and is the result of intensive consultations. The DQAF provides a structure for assessing existing practices against best practices, including internationally accepted methodologies. It has proved to be valuable for at least three groups of users.

- To guide IMF staff on the use of data in policy evaluation, preparing the data module of Reports on the Observance of Standards and Codes (ROSCs), and designing technical assistance.
- To guide country efforts e.g., to prepare self-assessments.
- To guide data users in evaluating data for policy analysis, forecasts and economic performance."[88]

The DQAF contains six elements: pre-requisites of quality, integrity, methodological soundness, accuracy and reliability, serviceability and accessibility. Broadly, these can be grouped into four or five elements that indicate something about the data (its rigour, timeliness, quality, dissemination, etc.) and one or two elements (prerequisites and integrity) that indicate something about the broader environment. Both groups are clearly vital indicators of capacity. However, while the DQAF is an excellent tool for evaluating data quality and some of the institutional factors that affect data quality, broader capacity building lessons and evidence from this study suggest that more emphasis is needed on the environment. It is hoped that the presently proposed framework can be used in conjunction with the DQAF in future work, and linkages are discussed further below.

'The Reference Regional Strategic Framework For Statistical Capacity Building In Africa: Better Statistics For Improved Development Outcomes' (RRSF) is also relevant to measuring statistical capacity. This was prepared jointly by the African Development Bank, ECA, the World Bank and the Partnership for Statistics in the 21st Century (PARIS21). The Framework was adopted in February 2006 at the second Forum for Statistical Development in Africa (FASDEV-2) organized by the four sponsoring institutions. The Forum brought together all the key stakeholders involved in statistical development work in Africa: United Nations agencies, multilateral and bilateral institutions, sub-regional organizations, statistical training centres and Directors of National Statistical Offices from 51 African countries. The stakeholders assigned AfDB and ECA responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the RRSF.

The RRSF includes several themes that should be included in a measure of capacity.

The RRSF first theme covers – like the DQAF – the technical components of statistics but emphasises analysis and dissemination.

- Investing in the underlying statistical infrastructure needed to support efficient and effective statistical systems.
- Making effective use of new technologies to support data collection, compilation and dissemination.
- Strengthening the analysis of data by both producers and users to ensure that the results are relevant to the development process.
- Improving data dissemination and ensuring compliance with frameworks such as the General Data Dissemination System.

The second theme focuses on the institutional and management issues.

- Updating the legal and regulatory framework for statistics and ensuring that it is in line with the UN fundamental principles and good practice for official statistics.
- Strengthening coordination and communication between all players, including data providers and users.
- Placing emphasis on the development and more effective use of human resources in statistics.

While in the third theme, the RRSF focuses on the results focus, strategic direction and resources for statistics:

- Mainstreaming statistics as a key support activity for the development process and as a cornerstone of the process of improving governance and accountability.
- Improving the funding and sustainability of statistics, in particular in support of the implementation of NSDS.

87 Part I Cambodia 136; Niger 94; Zambia 113; DFID 68.

88 http://dsbb.imf.org/vgn/images/pdfs/dqrs_factsheet.pdf

These themes of data quality, institutional and managerial issues, and results focus, strategic direction and funding are clearly important elements of statistical capacity. Our proposed framework draws on and expands these themes, which resonate with the evidence gathered in the case studies.

Complimenting this literature review, by comparing the presence or absence of a set of factors in case study countries, the evaluators began to establish the presence of factors that impacted positively on the performance of the statistical system, as perceived by users. Conversely the team looked at the absence of certain factors, and the negative impact this had on the outcomes. The details of the pillars derived from this analysis are set out, together with a description of their inter-relationships. It is suggested that these pillars are all required for effective capacity building—none are sufficient to substantially improve capacity alone.

A draft evaluation framework based on these pillars appears in Section 5.

4.2 The Pillars of Statistical Capacity – Basis of the Framework

If statistical capacity reflects a country's sustainable ability to produce statistics to meet the needs of various user groups, and the ability of national users to use those statistics, what are the inputs that increase this ability? These are the inputs that statistical capacity building should improve. Fieldwork and the literature review revealed eight necessary conditions. These are presented here in approximate reverse order of their degree of statistical technicality. The process of identifying necessary inputs (based on existing capacity lessons and experience from the countries in the study) was as follows:

- What are the key elements of the ability to use and produce statistics (what do producers and users perceive as elements of successful statistical systems)?
- Is this element sufficient to deliver high statistical capacity?
- What else is required (what do producers and users perceive as absent from unsuccessful statistical systems)?

This process identified the following necessary inputs:

1. Results-focus at the top of government.
2. Accountability of statistical agencies to government.
3. Enabling institutional environment for reform.
4. Feasible strategy and work programme.
5. Predictable resources appropriate to the strategy and capacity constraints.
6. Good management and leadership of the national statistical system.
7. Sufficient qualified and trained staff.
8. Appropriate statistical tools and methods.

More could be added, but most of these are components of the above, with the exception of donors observing Paris principles; non-observance of these principles has led in the past to a resource led free-for-all.

Any cooperating partners wishing to support statistics might wish to use this draft framework as a diagnostic in order to design the programme of support. In a sense the current NSDS performs this role, but the draft evaluation framework sets out a systematic series of questions. It also tries to incorporate the Paris principles in the context of statistics – for example in terms of mutual accountability, what is the strength of the governance and reporting systems; or for alignment, how realistic is the strategy; and in terms of ownership, whose needs does it reflect. The correspondence between the questions, pillars and Paris principles are spelled out in Section 5 (which presents the draft evaluation framework) and Section 6 (which further explores examples of support).

The absence of reasonable capacity in any of the elements, which also covers the country's policy, government institutional and statistical organisational contexts, may lead to poor performance of statistical support. Where any of the elements are weak, cooperating partners should consider support and interventions to strengthen problem areas or alternative means of obtaining the results they require. Some of the pillars will require collaboration with other sectors in development, crucially public reform programmes, MTEF processes and monitoring systems linked to PRSPs, sector programmes and PBRS.

There is an implied sequence in the pillars. Without the topmost pillar of a results focus at the heart of public policy, the support provided to all the other pillars is likely to be ineffective. For example, strengthening governance without an interest in results at the top is unlikely to bring about the desired accountability. Supplying technical skills to individuals in a poorly managed office is unlikely to bring about sustained capacity improvements; or providing significant funds to offices with very few qualified staff is unlikely to result in good quality results unless human resources can be strengthened with the funding.

These pillars map well onto the capacity building studies noted above. The elements of individual, organisational, and institutional capacity, drawn from general capacity building studies, are clearly present. The DQAF and RRSF components are also incorporated and extended. Table 4.1 below links the evaluation pillars to the DQAF elements and indicators.

Table 4.1 Mapping the pillars to the DQAF

Pillar	DQAF Elements	DQAF Indicator
(i) Results focus	5. Accessibility (partial)	5.1 5.2 (partially)
(ii) Accountable governance	0. Prerequisites of quality (partial)	0.1 (partially)
(iii) Enabling environment	0. Prerequisites of Quality (partial)	0.1 (partially)
(iv) Feasible strategy	0. Prerequisites of Quality (partial)	
(v) Resources	0. Prerequisites of Quality (partial)	0.2
(vi) Management and leadership	0. Prerequisites of Quality 1. Integrity 5. Accessibility	0.1, 0.2, 0.3 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 5.1, 5.3
(vii) Qualified staff	0. Prerequisites of Quality (partial)	0.2
(viii) Appropriate methods and tools	2. Methodological soundness 3. Accuracy & reliability 4. Serviceability 5. Accessibility	2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4 5.1, 5.2, 5.3

As Table 4.1 shows, the current DQAF covers in detail the bottom four pillars of our draft framework, (v) Resources, (vi) Management and leadership, (vii) Qualified staff, (vii) Appropriate methods and tools. It also covers the institutional environment partially in terms of appropriate legislation. The upper four pillars ((i) Results focused government, (ii) Accountable governance mechanism, (iii) Enabling environment and (iv) Feasible strategy) show as less well covered by the DQAF, which focuses more on the quality of data and the prerequisites of quality, than on the overarching governance environment that includes the use of data and more subjective indicators of results focus and accountability.

In this sense, the pillars represent an extension of the DQAF, complimentary to extensions in other studies. The pillars extend the DQAF most importantly to be explicit about capacity as a characteristic of the statistical system rather than of data. In particular, capacity is seen here as including the use of statistics, the ability of the system to respond to new demands, and the sustainability of statistical arrangements. This is in keeping with the various studies that develop and apply the DQAF (e.g. Laliberté 2002; Defays and Laliberté 2006) and make the statistical environment a more explicit focus. The present report tries to develop these attempts further, and should be seen as complimentary to them.

The study provides evidence to support our draft framework, but more evidence may be required to explore various aspects. These will be discussed in later chapters. Below, each of the elements is discussed individually.

4.3 Focus on Results-based Management at the Highest Level of Government

This is the highest level factor identified, and is a necessary condition for statistics to thrive in any country as it creates the principal demand. Some of the literature has discussed both data supply and data demand. For example, Scott wrote for PARIS21 in 2005 that "it is necessary to adopt measures that will simultaneously increase both the demand and supply of statistics, as well as improve the dialogue between producers and users of data"[89]. However, recent analyses have largely assumed that supplying statistics is the major problem, and working on the demand side has been largely ignored in much of the recent global forums on statistics (see Hanoi and Marrakech). This may be because the demand from cooperating partners is growing and obvious:

> "However, as an increasing share of development assistance is provided through budget support, the demand for data to assess overall development performance is increasing. At the same time the harmonization agenda means that donors must increasingly rely on national statistical systems to generate the data needed to allocate resources and to monitor performance. Both sides, therefore, have good reason to invest in better statistics. What is needed now is to translate this demand into action and to ensure that assistance is delivered at a level and in a sustained form that will enable the required investments to be made and the returns realized[90]".

89 Scott, Christopher (2005) 'Measuring Up to the Measurement Problem. The role of statistics in evidence based policy-making' PARIS21

90 Third International Roundtable Managing for Development Results Hanoi, Vietnam – February 5 - 8, 2007:. Page 9

The evidence of this study does not support the assumption that a results focus among governments is automatic, and where it is the demands may be different. In the case study countries, demand for results at the highest level in government was built in a number of different ways. In one case (Niger[91]) by national concerns over a low score in the Human Development Index; in others[92] by an established commitment to managing by results at the highest level in government[93]; whilst in others[94] the replacement of conditionality by a results focus linked to stronger budgetary monitoring processes is driving the statistics agenda. If accountability is to be effective, there must be a real demand for data at the political level.

Government decision-making processes are critical for statistical capacity. In Namibia, the government's decisions (about the developing statistics office and its absorption into the Planning Secretariat) probably reflect the very early stage of the democratic opening at which the need to develop some independent statistical capacity developed. Major factors in Vietnam were the strong demand from the international private sector (which the government was making major efforts to attract) for better economic information; and equally the government's urgent need to find mechanisms for keeping abreast of economic activity of the small-scale and informal private sector, groups that had previously barely existed. We note that in Bangladesh (Table 6.3) the government funds economic and agricultural surveys, while donors fund social surveys: this is a trend that seems to be developing in Zambia. This relates to the political economy of the country, with a much stronger focus of politicians on the economy than on social sectors.

The necessary political momentum and policy framework for statistics is therefore often missing. Lacking this imperative from the top, results are too often not delivered in time to meet the policy timetable in which the PRSP or equivalent country or sector policy context is developed. In most of the countries studied, the results of key surveys regularly missed the narrow window for policy development; only in Rwanda and Niger was the poverty survey delivered on time for the second PRSP development. Failure to provide key results on time does little to promote a results focus among senior policy makers, and undermines any advocacy activities.

A results focus is often constrained by insufficient dissemination of results. The GDDS has a specific focus on dissemination, but the Statistics Department of the IMF writing in January 2008 noted that "after 10 years of experience with the GDDS, a marked improvement in data dissemination might have been expected, but as shown in this paper, data dissemination, particularly the periodicity and timeliness of data, remains weak….". The author suggests a change in the philosophical underpinnings of the GDDS to place greater emphasis on data dissemination to the public and less emphasis on updating the description of the existing system in metadata.[95]

The same IMF paper recognises the weakness in not assisting countries more with dissemination of data. …. more emphasis on putting data into the public domain might well have helped countries progress more rapidly. Future proposals to require GDDS participants to post data and an advance release calendar on a public website would improve the accessibility and is to be welcomed. There was very little evidence of specific technical assistance to support countries in dissemination of data, other than the recent Accelerated Data Programme that is assisting countries with archiving and web dissemination. All development partners have put much more emphasis on the technical aspects of improving data collection and on methodologies. This, in the view of the evaluators, has been a serious weakness in the coverage of capacity building.

Beyond dissemination, there is another step in establishing a results focus: getting data used in a relevant policy context. There has been too little attention paid by the statistical support to establishing a results focus in country. Even though support to other sectors has a focus on results, this has largely been in isolation from statistical support. Integration into the development debate seems to have been stronger in the larger statistical projects identified in the DFID study[96], but even so, a much greater focus is needed from statisticians and supporting programmes. Kibuka (2007) mentions a proposal by the GDDS to integrate statistical plans into the PRSP[97] and Zambia is instanced as a proposed pilot; however the evaluators found no evidence of it in country.

The large-scale evaluation commissioned by the European Commission, covering some 30 statistical projects assisted with EU aid funds (ADE 2007), gave principal stress in its conclusions and recommendations to issues around the institutional context for statistics. It called for much closer attention than in the past to country context and the fit between project design and decision-maker needs, and with other existing institutions involved in production and use of related information. The study found it still not possible to point to any case in which the dialogue between statistics producer and users, or the level of awareness of the importance of statistical information, had improved. But an encouraging shift was perceptible among new projects, especially those linked with budget sup-

91 Part I Niger 75

92 Part II Rwanda ; Liberia 171 (focus on statistics in PRSP)

93 HE Paul Kagame (2007) ' The Importance of Statistics as a basis for Effective policy-making in Africa'. African Statistical Journal No. 4 May 2007, p168
White E.M et al 'Tanzania: Harmonization of Results Reporting', MfDR Principles in Action: Sourcebook on Emerging Good Practices

94 See Hanoi Roundtable on Development Results

95 IMF (2008) page 5

96 Part I DFID 82

97 Kibuka (2007), p23: 'one of which notably assists five countries (Lesotho, Malawi, Seychelles, Sudan, and Zambia) to integrate their GDDS plans for improvements and other statistical reforms into the PRSPs to enhance the priority and funding for such reforms'.

port, to generating data and promoting analysis for evidence-based policy formulation and implementation.

There has been some good global statistical advocacy (films, advocacy toolkit etc.) produced by PARIS21, but too little attention has been paid to getting statistics used by those developing policy or allocating resources within country for better use of information and statistics. Users mentioned obstacles to their use such as timeliness, accessibility and comparability[98]. Recent initiatives in improving the accessibility of data are likely to be beneficial, if supported by country programmes for data users. However data dissemination is regularly too late to meet vital windows in the policy cycle. Data which comes too late for policy makers to use in the design and monitoring process, misses the entire point of the results agenda.

Donor focus on results linked to budget support can also stimulate a high level demand, but the evaluation found little evidence that statistics were discussed at high level negotiations between partners. As a result of this lack of discussion (or perhaps exclusion of statisticians from the debate), statistics strategies are often developed in parallel arenas and miss benefiting from the vital forums in which monitoring systems and indicator needs are agreed between partners.

Seminars addressed to users, to establish what is of greatest value to them in statistics, to convey analytical techniques and to discuss interpretations of statistical findings, can have significant substantive effect, in addition to encouraging the interest of potentially influential supporters of statistical supply. Small allocations accompanying some aid programmes, such as EU budget support or World Bank social funds, can often be used for purposes of this sort or to finance winning proposals in research competitions to encourage exploitation of the data. Niger's[99] attentions to users have already generated demand beyond what the statistics institute may be able to meet.

Though it is very seldom possible to give chapter and verse about the impact they have had on budgetary appropriations for statistics, statistical advocacy initiatives do often appear to contribute usefully to the capacity building task. African statisticians' thorough evaluation (CASD Task Force 2000) of the failed Addis Ababa 1990s Statistical Development Plan put much of the blame on the virtual absence of significant publicity/promotional effort. Persistent practical emphasis by political leaders on genuine results-based management often has the greatest effect, and the representatives of external partners in countries can do much to reinforce this message.

The lack of consideration of statistics as a sector in Joint Assistance Strategies was noted by the team. Resident donor statistics experts in countries would do much to improve donor alignment on statistics, and as in Tanzania, help other partners to 'speak with one voice' on the sector.

In general, there appears to be discordance in support between the programmes designed to support statistical production, those designed to support the development of monitoring systems, and those designed to improve the use of data in policy. Only in one country (Tanzania) did we find strong links. This is a system where users had noted improvements[100].

4.4 Accountability of the Statistical Agencies to Government

The key process in ensuring the good performance of statistical systems is the development of effective governance and accountability mechanisms. Neither the simple existence of a Board or Council nor agency status is sufficient; it has to be active and hold statistical producers to account. Where the statistical agency is semi-autonomous, its Board or Council should be the accountable body for the performance of the statistical agency, and at least, depending on the country, report annually on the state of the statistical system[101]. The study uncovered several cases where the accountability to the Board was undermined by parallel accountability mechanisms to donors (Tanzania, Rwanda) and where Boards were not fully accountable for the agencies' performance due to their method of appointment, composition, constitution or the limited expectations placed upon them by government. An additional problem is that many of these bodies apparently meet rarely, unless led by a person of note who has a results focus, such as the responsible Permanent Secretary in Tanzania or the Chairman of the Board of the Bureau of Statistics in Uganda. In South Africa the Council has a clear legal responsibility to report to Parliament. The Paris principles recommend that donors should use government reporting systems, and where these are weak, support should be given to strengthening them.

The studies showed that better overall results occur where the Statistical Board or Council or parent ministry holds the statistical producer accountable for meeting the performance targets set by its own government or parent ministry (Tanzania[102] also Niger, Rwanda). To maintain the accountability to top-levels of government, the Board or Council (or the Director General) should be required to report on statistical performance to Parliament or other high level users such as the Cabinet or President. If this is not the case then the statistics agency will be largely unaccountable for meeting its commitments. This is even more so where a large number of donors provide most of the funding off budget. This is a situation that needs to be strengthened and reinforced by donor support.

98 Part I DFID 74

99 Part I Niger 97, 110

100 PARIS21 (2007) Tanzania Peer Review. Permission received from Director of NBS Tanzania to cite report.

101 Its role over other statistical producers in the NSS will depend on the local context of statistical governance.

102 Part II Tanzania 78

Permanent National Statistics Councils can play an effective role, but in the examples studied, few appeared to be active. The purpose is to bring together representatives of the statistical institutes, of the government departments that are important providers or users of statistical information, and of civil society. Their main function is to contribute to the democratisation of information through reviewing, and advising on, the work programmes of the statistical bodies. The statisticians who did the CASD evaluation of the Addis Ababa Plan gave attention to this area and found that composition was critical. Where the Councils were not functional, many members had been co-opted on the basis of their official position, and some had neither personal interest nor any solutions to contribute.

A relatively elaborate and powerful structure is the Tunisian Conseil National de la Statistique which was set up in the late 1990s, according to an independent audit of the nation's statistical system (Kiregyera, Spanneut, et al. 2006) which reported on its effectiveness. Membership of the Council consists of 18 producers and 18 users, including accountants, bankers, farmers, women, unions, academics, and representatives of employers. They meet quarterly, several commissions and working groups also operate, and they have a small permanent staff of four. The Council is responsible for statistical strategies, planning, programme monitoring and evaluation, and organization of the national statistical system. The President of the Council reports directly to the Prime Minister. Conversely a council established in the Gambia under recent reforms seems never to have met.

At present, many statistical agencies are largely unaccountable, or accountable to several donors who have available to them very few sanctions, other than to withdraw funding. The withdrawal of funding by one partner in the presence of a strong demand for data is likely to be replaced by support from another cooperating partner. In one of the statistically weaker case study countries, the evaluators discussed with donor representatives the likelihood of taking a common approach with the statistical agency in order to improve performance. A number of donor representatives were uncomfortable with jeopardising their flows of data.

There were instances where technical assistance was used to assist in the development of accountability structures, such as Statistics Boards or Councils, in most cases by assisting with new laws or regulations[103]. In most cases, it is too early to assess whether these structures have led to a genuine accountability to government. The impression gained is that the structures tend to be developed from within the statistical office itself, rather than by the statistical users to whom the office should be accountable. This would tend to reduce the degree of accountability to government. In some cases, however, the composition of the Boards appears too political to preserve the independence of the statistical producers. There is a delicate trade-off between maintaining a professional interest in the results of the statistical system, taking too academic a view of the outputs, and political interference.

While there has been some support to governance bodies, most of the reporting systems of capacity building support have undermined their accountability. Accountability is an issue of harmonisation for all cooperating partners in statistics. Even in recent proposals for scaling up support to statistical systems[104], reporting systems to the Bank or to national consortia of cooperating partners seem to be proposed. This has the effect of undermining national ownership and accountability processes. The local accountability processes seemed to work effectively in Rwanda, Tanzania and Niger, but even here donors have set up their own committees to monitor statistical performance and to administer funds. In Burkina Faso, where performance has been said to be poor, partners are now working much more closely with the Board to ensure better accountability.

This is a very important lesson from the study. Accountability to national governments is extremely important if the performance of agencies is to be improved. Accountability to many donors (as many as 14 in the case study countries) is very unlikely to be effective, but to ensure that governments hold their agencies to account, the statistics that they produce must be highly relevant to governments and well linked to and coordinated with the policy process. The EC evaluation notes that support was too often unrelated to national priorities[105].

Just to underline the importance of demand and accountability, we again cite the case of the CPI where the product is of great significance to governments for economic management. The Consumer Price Index was rarely, if ever, late. IMF (2008) notes that 100% of African countries participating in the GDDS met timeliness and periodicity recommendations (93% worldwide) compared with 14% (44% worldwide) on population data. Statistical managers were clear that they were held strongly accountable for the CPI results by their parent ministries.

4.5 Enabling Institutional Environment for Reform

The government institutional and policy context is critical to enabling the statistical system to function effectively. This involves the organisation of government, the degree of verticality or inter-ministerial cooperation, and placement of statistics in relation to other central government functions and local government bodies. Organisational reform of the statistical system facilitates the performance of management. Successful reform depends largely on the national context. It is very unlikely that a statistical office can reform independently of other public sector reforms. The extensive and successful

103 DFID in Rwanda, GDDS in Namibia

104 Better Statistics for Better Results: Framework Document (2008) – draft version circulated to PARIS21

105 ADE (2007) page iii

reforms in Tanzania and Rwanda depended on the willingness of the government to undertake general civil service reform and to promote semi-autonomous agencies. The Zambian Government has had much less success in reform to improve the performance of agencies, and is very reluctant to go ahead with a semi-autonomous status for its CSO until it is convinced of its utility. In Burkina Faso statistical reform went ahead, but the results are not yet satisfactory and staff performance reputedly remains unchanged[106]. In Liberia a semi-autonomous agency status was agreed and the law changed immediately after the war ended. Despite the change in the law, the expected reforms did not follow. It is certain that a one-size-fits-all approach to statistical reform will not do, the reforms have to be very carefully integrated with government reform programmes, and have in place other elements which will be discussed below.

The institutional environment also includes the statistical laws in which a statistical system operates. All the countries studied had had recent revisions to their statistics laws: Tanzania (2002), Liberia (2004), Rwanda (2005), Burkina Faso (2003), Niger (2004), Cambodia (2005), with the exception of Zambia 1964 and Bangladesh (1972 Census Order & 1964 Industrial Statistics Act). They provide the basis for the governance of the statistical system, and the coordination of official statistics. A good law is an important pre-requisite of quality.

From the literature review the team noted the case of Namibia. The major reversals and very long drawn out decision processes in Namibia reflected extreme shortage of senior government officers. The rigidity, power and high verticality of Vietnamese government structures give the General Statistics Office (GSO) strong internal production capacity, but there are many additional obstacles to achieving greatest service to potential users, and the efficiencies that could result from collaboration with other departments (such as Customs and Tax authorities on business registers). The country's public institutions still have relatively weak service orientation, GSO's mechanisms for user consultation are not well developed, and government departments are apparently reluctant to divulge their internal information or databases to the statistics office.

There has been some focus on improving the conditions of service of statistical staff to improve inceptives and staff retention, but in only three of the countries studied were the salaries raised (Rwanda, Niger and Tanzania), and there are concerns in Niger about the sustainability of the arrangement. In these cases the performance of the agency has improved, but it is difficult to say whether this has been due to better salaries, better management or a stronger results focus from the government – as the conditions co-exist.

In Cambodia, donors paid salary supplementation, but these were not harmonised and led to distortions in the work programme priorities, and again the arrangement is not sustainable. In Cambodia, as in Zambia, the conditions of service are strongly controlled by other parts of government - in Cambodia by the Prime Minister's Office, and in Zambia by the Ministry of Finance – and this slowed up reforms, promotions and staffing decisions.

The necessary reforms relate not only to salary but to the freedom for managers to organise their agencies effectively. In Cambodia, changes to the organisation structure were delayed by higher authorities; in Zambia promotion, recruitment and staffing decisions were handled by the parent ministry in a slow, unresponsive and very bureaucratic way. Other organisations are burdened by large numbers of unproductive staff who cannot be disposed of and who add significantly to costs. One of the major advantages to autonomy seems to the evaluators to be freedom to reform, in circumstances where reforms would make a significant contribution and where sufficient accountability to higher authorities is part of the reform and likely to be observed.

In the EC evaluation of its support to statistical capacity building, the spread of benefits from the projects reviewed had suffered from the fact that not one of the 30 had addressed the functioning of the statistical system within the public administration. But one noteworthy project (Appui au Renforcement des Capacités Statistiques in Burkina Faso) had focused directly on improved coordination between the central statistical institute and line-ministry statistical services. Legal and regulatory frameworks directly related to the statistical work assisted, had been addressed in one or two projects, but not more broadly. Management issues had been touched only by some coverage in training.

4.6 Feasible Strategy and Work Programme

A strategy for statistics, or a similar instrument such as a monitoring plan, is necessary for effective allocation of resources, planning of statistical activities in relation to the available capacity, and provides the tool for cooperating partners to align around.

The increasing need for better statistics from users worldwide has outstripped the capacity of country statistical agencies to supply on demand, therefore very careful prioritisation is needed. In the early 1990s many developing country statistical offices tended to have spare capacity as home grown demand was weak, while the efforts to build statistical skills by training and technical assistance had been largely successful. Tanzania is an example of this. The increased demand for statistics arising from support to social sectors in the late 1990's was able to build on this capacity. However by 2000 the demand for statistics, particularly from development partners, began to exceed the capacity of countries to deliver the statistics. With limited capacity to deliver statistics and a growing *ad hoc* demand for statistics cooperating partners, the situation became chaotic and quality suffered.

106 Part I Zambia 101, Part II Burkina Faso 132

Strategies are crucial tools for allocating scarce resources but are constrained by a lack of evidence about costs of different options. The principles of results-based management and evidence-based policy mean that strategic choices should be made with the aid of more accurate estimates of costs and potential benefits than seem to be available. It should be possible for the principal economic policymakers in a country to agree amongst themselves and with their leading statisticians the most critically important decisions they are likely to confront over the following year or eighteen months. This would lead to identification of the data uncertainties and gaps which it would be most helpful to have filled. This should be followed by consideration of the alternative ways of filling them, and the costs and benefits of the alternatives. Very similar considerations would apply to the needs of sector specialists and other longer-term planners.

Decisions of this nature might also be elevated to a higher level, establishing data generation/analysis priorities for the overall poverty reduction strategy and its application, and regularly updating them in light of political events and the findings of policy monitoring. The CASD evaluation gave much stress to the lack of strategy in most countries for systematically assessing changing requirements for data. It urged (CASD Task Force 2000, p. 14) that "statistical activities …should be geared towards meeting crucial challenges facing African economies and societies. A permanent and well-structured mechanism for identifying new challenges and opportunities for addressing them should be established."

Well thought out decisions are required not only between alternative possible modes of production but also about whether or not to change inherited practices, which often account for the majority of a statistical institute's expenditures. With regard to developing African and Asian countries, it has been observed that it would have been less expensive to improve administrative data collection procedures, instead of relying so much on purpose-made large-scale sample surveys. SWAps also seem generally to have given better results when reasonably good-quality administrative data were available in the sector MIS[107], so that less reliance was required on sample surveys. But there seems to be very little data available comparing expected and actual costs of the alternatives and those that were chosen. The evaluators found a reference to a proposed experiment of this nature in Tanzania, which was subsequently abandoned. Inherited standards for data quality and frequency also need review from time to time, taking account of both the costs of adhering to them and the evolving utility of particular figures, as illustrated with regard to Vietnam (Stage et al 2006).

The strategy, resources, and the management structures in the statistics sector correspond approximately to what evaluations of capacity building in general have called 'organisational capacity', which besides setting out statistical priorities incorporate plans and objectives for organisational transformation.

Any strategy, as well as defining priorities, should address the strategic goals of the organisation, in the case of statistics this usually implies organisational reform or transformation.

The study found several cases where support to statistical capacity building involved supporting a strategy - including Niger, Zambia, Liberia, Rwanda, Cambodia, Tanzania and Burkina Faso. This was usually undertaken through technical assistance, or through the provision of resources, as by the World Bank Trust Fund for Statistical Capacity Building. Strategies improved the functioning of the statistical system where, as in Niger, the strategy developed was realistic, and incorporated change management practices that were acted on by the government with the substantial support of key development partners.

However, there were several cases (Cambodia, Zambia, Burkina Faso) where the strategy was less realistic and where organisational transformation was not successful. In these cases, strategies tended to lack clear priorities for statistical activities, and were developed principally to attract funds from donors rather than to plan activities to meet the needs of statistical users within countries. Kibuka (2007) notes,

> "It is important that resource claims for statistical reforms incorporate prudence and realism. Overly ambitious infrastructural projects and reforms resulted in substantial resource requirements which were not acceptable to the relevant ministries of finance and donors"[108].

Strategies have proved to be very useful in Tanzania in limiting the demands for information to those statistics required by the PRSP and the core needs of government. Associated funds to carry them out in a predictable and measured way also drove a focus on core priorities. In Tanzania the strategy was a multi sector poverty monitoring strategy, not one solely for the statistical agency or statistical system. There may be merits in elevating the ownership of statistical strategies to user bodies rather than the technical providers, to ensure full buy-in from the government and external partners. Certainly many statistical strategies 'owned' by statistical agencies continue to be neglected by governments and funders alike and in several cases (Liberia, Zambia, Cambodia, Burkina Faso, Gambia[109]) the proposed institutional reforms were very slow to be acted on, or as yet never acted on at all. The situation appears to be better where there is a very strong results focus at the very top of government, as is the case of Rwanda and Niger, where funds have been secured for strategies and reform processes supported.

The discordance between production and use of statistics is played out in the development of statistical strategies; it is unclear why these are carried out in parallel with the develop-

107 Part I Cambodia 186; Zambia 141

108 Kibuka (2007) 24.

109 GBOS 'Strategic Plan for the Development of Statistics in the Gambia 2007-2011'

ment of monitoring systems, or to PRSP design processes. In many cases this has led to strategies which have limited ownership beyond the statistical agency, and in one case (Cambodia[110]) a competing strategy existed in the main user ministry.

4.7 Predictable Resources Appropriate to the Strategy and Capacity Constraints

It is clear that more resources for statistics are necessary. Resources here include finance and adequate equipment (vehicles, buildings, information technology, communications etc.). Statistical systems without sufficient, predictable resources to perform key functions will have low capacity. MAPS costed the increased resource needs at $24-28 million dollars per year (for the period 2005-2008).

One of the major challenges for statistical managers is the search for funding for its statistical activities. Only recently have country statistics multi-donor funds or statistics sector-wide projects become more common, and in this study Tanzania and Rwanda are examples, while Niger and Burkina are being supported with significant longer-term funding.

There has been significant provision of resources to support statistical systems over the years, and the World Bank Indicators of Statistical Capacity have shown improvements, although less so in Africa,[111] and it should be noted that these at best capture data quality and availability rather than statistical system capacity and may be poor guides to actual capacity.[112] The length and predictability of funding is clearly an important factor, if funds for a strategy are not assured, then the statistical managers are certainly going to accept any funding offer which is made, regardless of what their strategies include or what other funding might become available at a later date. While funding is still largely *ad hoc* and provided by external partners, the unpredictable funding environment will lead to funding led priority setting and the neglect of key country priorities.

The evaluators noted that reforms to economic statistics require significant funding for economic surveys and censuses, and to support other statistical inputs, but that these funds were rarely provided by donors. The IMF itself has few, if any, resources for data collection exercises. Resources for data collection exercises in the area of social statistics were much more readily available. Kibuka (2007) using evidence from the ROSC in 22 countries found that 91% of national accounts systems lacked adequate resources.

There is some evidence, although not strong, that governments are now stepping in to fund, via budget support, some of their own statistical priorities such as economic surveys or data for CPI modernisation. This was the case in Zambia[113] which had sought resources for an economic census for some years from donors and been unsuccessful, despite the IMF regularly instancing economic statistical reforms as a high priority in its country review missions. A similar story was found in Niger for support to their Household Budget Survey.

On the whole government funding for statistics has been limited to salaries, administrative costs and small routine series such as the CPI. In both Niger and Zambia (and also Rwanda for District surveys) support was available for surveys with a high government priority, however most social surveys are almost exclusively funded by donors. Even where government support has been made available the funding in the subsequent year tends to return to the basic administrative costs. We have a picture emerging of governments funding offices and salaries, and a few high priority activities largely related to very high priorities; while donors fund the field costs of social surveys and governments the salary and core costs of their professional staff. Further work into whether this is the optimal funding arrangement is recommended.

Among the more successful secure funding arrangements was the Tanzania Poverty Monitoring Master Plan which provided a strategy and an associated fund around which donors and the Bureau of Statistics could align. Where funds or long-term funding programmes were absent, harmonisation of funding was particularly problematic, especially in projects where several donors provided earmarked funds for the same activity, but had different accounting and disbursement schedules delaying the statistical production process and increasing transaction costs[114].

Remote support, although providing for more strategic needs, was problematic in some cases and led to duplication of effort (Liberia and Sierra Leone[115]) or was unresponsive to requests (Rwanda, Zambia[116]). This was attributed by disappointed applicants to the bureaucracy involved, the lack of knowledge of country conditions and lack of dialogue in country. Edmunds (2005) also suggests that global funds associated with sector interests are more focussed on the international users than building capacity in country.

Assured funds are a necessary but not sufficient factor in improving statistical performance. One country in the study had received a Statcap loan[117], but despite the increase in resources the quality of output had not improved and account-

110 Part I Cambodia 138

111 IMF (2008) page 44. Worldwide increase of 24 points in period 1999-2006, 13.7 for Africa.

112 In fact, evidence from case studies on Cambodia (Part I Cambodia para 79) and Niger (Part I Niger para 68) indicate that changes in the World Bank Statistical Capacity Indicators can be poorly related to actual changes in capacity as perceived by stakeholders. The indicators are currently being revised, so these criticisms may not apply to the new indicators.

113 Part I Niger 81; Zambia 6.

114 Part 1 Zambia 121-122, Cambodia 145; Part II Burkina Faso 155-156

115 Part II Liberia 187

116 Part I Zambia 135-136; Part II Rwanda 45

117 A World Bank loan facility that offers large loans for statistical capacity building.

ability problems were raised by one of the external partners as a problem. Subsequent support from development partners is now likely to be channelled through its governance body to improve accountability and performance.

Assured funds are a necessary but not sufficient factor in improving statistical performance. Good governance of the system, a strategy around which to align, and above all a results focussed environment, are necessary.

4.8 Good Management and Leadership of the National Statistical System

This section can be divided into two sections, internal management and performance; and management of the whole national statistical system.

4.8.1 Management of the wider national statistical system (NSS)

Until recently the management of the wider system of all statistical producers had been largely forgotten. In many African countries the national statistical service existed, where statisticians served throughout government in a common professional cadre. This was abolished during the 1990s as the focus turned to production in the central agency and to SWAps in the sectors.

More recent demands on sectoral data to provide information for regular monitoring using routine data or specialist surveys, has revived the issue. This has been accelerated by budget support and performance assessment frameworks which require regular administrative data from all sectors. This is currently being addressed by NSDS support.

Better support for statistical coordination is required to improve the quality of regular sectoral data, which can potentially provide results more frequently, and at smaller geographical disaggregation than can surveys.

Even with a sector approach to statistics, line ministries are likely to continue to be responsible for producing their own statistics in most cases, but the results have to be harmonised with other data collection activities and quality assured by the central statistical agency, to ensure that users are not confused by the availability of several conflicting estimates for the same indicator.

There is little evidence of support being given to coordination of the statistical system other than the posting of metadata promoted very effectively by the GDDS and the DevInfo initiative for coordinating indicator information. The literature review and case studies identified one example, supported by the World Bank in Burkina Faso[118], whilst other support to developing NSS coordination structures is being supplied by the GDDS. None of the country case studies had established coordination mechanisms and in all three countries, results from the sector ministries were issued and quality controlled by the producing ministry. The EC evaluation identified lack of support to the entire statistical system as a major weakness in its capacity support.

Examples were found (Zambia, Cambodia, Niger[119]) of good Educational Information Systems (EMIS), supported by SWAps over a significant number of years, but even in these cases there were some unresolved tensions and quality issues between the ministry and the central statistical agency. Health SWAps seemed less effective. Some informants claimed this was because they could get by with DHS data (Tanzania, Cambodia[120]), but the reasons why clinicians are less interested in results is less clear. Further research might look at the activities of Health Metrics and UNESCO in raising standards in sector ministries.

Some SWAps have been effective in developing statistical systems, but the results have often been disputed or adversely affected by lack of input from the central statistical agency (Zambia[121]). No examples in the case studies were found of support addressing the national system as a sector, apart from the development of metadata for the NSS by the GDDS programme.

One largely neglected area is agricultural statistics from large scale surveys or censuses for better agricultural estimates for national accounts, poverty analysis etc.. Although small scale crop forecasting and post harvest surveys have generally continued, their reliability is frequently questioned. Support has been given recently, after a break of many years, to Tanzania, Rwanda and Niger, which is perhaps indicative of the changing fashions in support to sectors. Statistical agencies and agricultural ministries have traditionally collaborated, and still do. The treatment of statistics as a sector might increase the willingness of partners to collaborate in supporting wider sectoral statistical priorities.

4.8.2 Management of the statistical system

Support to surveys, particular series and *ad hoc* interventions do very little to enable support to management or organisational reform. Edmunds writing for PARIS21 in 2005 noted in respect of global programmes that;

> "despite the stated intentions that are set out on the relevant websites, capacity building and statistical development can often be weakly supported or ignored entirely, especially when donors have a pressing need for the information themselves"[122].

118 Part II Burkina Faso 110 – Support covered 8 line ministries

119 Part 1 Zambia 13; Cambodia 186; Niger 131-137;

120 Part I Cambodia 168

121 Part I Zambia 76

122 Edmunds (2005) para 30

In respect of *ad hoc* support he claims that

> "They are often once off support which provide no long term predictability of support that can help deal with intractable and deep rooted problems….[123]"

The management competence of the statistical office is critical to maximising the performance of staff, allocating resources within the office, and coordinating the statistical system. Well trained statistical staff will be unable to produce or use statistics effectively and in a timely manner unless the management systems are in place to facilitate this. These two inputs—the management capacity of the statistical offices and the degree of training of key staff—correspond to what other studies on capacity building have called 'organisational capacity' and 'individual capacity' respectively (see e.g. Oxford Policy Management 2006). While individual management training may be helpful, more sustainable capacity building is likely to be achieved by organisational reform processes, which put in place the supporting systems and processes.

In the cases where there has been alignment and harmonisation around a fund (Rwanda and Tanzania), or where support programmes have been much broader (Niger, Uganda etc.) the support given has tended to cover technical, organisational and institutional issues. However elsewhere much of the organisational and institutional support has been limited to strategy development or to changing the legal framework, rather than to performance management programmes or to internal reform. This has largely been handled by the countries themselves led by internal civil service reform programmes. Even in twinning programmes (Sida), the support to management capacity has been delivered late on or never delivered. This seems to be due to reluctance to get, or perhaps concerns about the legitimacy of getting, involved in matters beyond the purely technical.

Developing management skills is one of the perceived advantages of twinning arrangements, but the focus on management has been seen as something to be tackled in the later stages of a programme when trust has been established. Most often technical issues form the major focus of support (Sida[124]), partly because this is the most comfortable area for both sets of partners to work in. Management is difficult to improve unless the governance, strategy and funding mechanisms are in place. Good management is essential to improving the efficiency and sustainability of statistical support, but it can only be successful if other conditions are met.

Fieldwork, although the sample is small, made clear that poorly managed statistical offices are unable to perform well even when trained staff and resources are in place (Burkina Faso[125], Niger prior to the reforms), and that management which is perceived to be poor by stakeholders can also limit the availability of resources, render training programmes less efficient, and lead to unrealistic or inappropriate strategies (Zambia[126]). Conversely a well managed office produced better results and attracted supporting partners even where other institutional factors looked discouraging (Niger). In contrast to Sida's reluctance to interfere in management matters, the World Bank/EC support to Niger clearly involved itself in the selection of a chief statistician with very strong management skills.

The large-scale evaluation commissioned by the European Commission, covering some 30 statistical projects assisted with EU aid funds (ADE 2007), found that only one project had supported management of statistics agencies and this support was in the form of training.

One issue that may be problematic in terms of strengthening management in the statistical institution is that this is often perceived as being beyond the usual remit of statistical support programmes. Opportunities should be taken to utilise wider public sector reform programmes to influence management practices, and beyond that to encourage and support full accountability to government for delivering the necessary inputs to the results agenda.

4.9 Sufficient Qualified and Trained Staff

Qualified and suitably trained staff, available in all statistical institutions (including line ministries and the central statistical office), are the bedrock of the statistical system. Without them quality will be low and sustainability difficult to achieve. One of the limiting characteristics of the states recovering from conflict or crisis included in the study, was the shortage of qualified staff. This was particularly problematic in Liberia and still a limiting factor in Rwanda. In Zambia which has been particularly badly hit by the AIDS pandemic, finding and retaining young qualified statisticians was problematic, as no statistical training school exists in the country and conditions of service are poor compared with competitor organisations.

Whilst most statistical support programmes provide training, without a basic grounding in statistics or another numerate discipline the training is unlikely to be absorbed to the level required for full sustainability. Even in some of the better qualified offices the lack of good computing skills prevented the implementation of improvements to some systems.

The availability of statistical schools producing trained graduate statisticians was a priority for every statistical manager interviewed in the study. The study noted that grants to statistical training schools and to trainees now were less common than in earlier years, and in Anglophone Africa this was often raised as a severe capacity issue. In a situation where statisticians are demanded by many agencies other than the public sector, it is important to maintain the supply. Inhibiting young statisticians' chances of advancement by poor promo-

123 Edmunds (2005) para 17

124 Part I Sida 54

125 Part II Burkina Faso 132

126 Part I Zambia 74

tion and management practices does little to improve morale, performance or retention. It was observed in Zambia that junior professionals valued training at least as highly as salary and allowances, but there was little evidence of strong donor support to statistical training schools in the more recent years of the study.

Conversely Niger was well supplied with professional statisticians from the francophone training schools, and Cambodia had built up its statistical cadre from a post war base of zero.

While formal training to degree level is a necessary base for quality and for further training, real sustainable impact in offices with qualified staff was achieved by long-term on-the-job support to trained statisticians (Zambia[127]), either by technical assistance or by twinning arrangements. There was little evidence that workshops or short–term training inputs improved systems (Zambia), although they proved useful in introducing new ideas or honing well established skills. To put it in the words of one of the informants from a regional body, "workshops tell you what to do, but not how to do it". Regional training, where long-term and focussed on country needs (rather than international ones) was clearly successful (Afristat[128]).

Support to maintaining the supply of qualified statisticians has been particularly weak in Anglophone Africa (Zambia[129]), and seems not to have been quickly addressed as a priority in countries recovering from war (Rwanda, Liberia[130]), although we note that the recently published PRSP of Liberia includes training statistical staff as one of its targets. The lack of qualified staff[131], and for many, the lack of suitable incentives and career structures (Zambia, Burkina[132]) has had a negative impact on the results of support.

In almost all countries studied the quality and timeliness of results are problematic, and this seems to be a direct result of the rather ambitious work programmes attempted in relation to the capacity of the statistical offices. Kibuka (2007) noted that "Constraints to the effective TA provision has been another issue contributing to the need to merge statistical and development strategies. In general LICs lack resources (financial, IT and skilled manpower) to design and implement statistical reforms[133]".

In the early 1990s DFID provided training to degree level for a large number of sub-professionals and in Zambia this is still an aspect of DFID support which is most highly regarded by the staff and their managers. Records are hard to come by, but it appears that most of the graduates who had not died in the pandemic, were still in the system either nationally or regionally. It was said at the time that training to degree level had been curtailed due to retention problems, in retrospect this was a short-sighted view given the high demand for statistically trained staff in developing countries. In fact the evaluation team met one staff member of the central statistical office in Zambia who had gained a distinction in a statistical diploma in EASTC in 1995 and was still hoping that his graduate level training would be sponsored. He has been retained as a statistical officer for at least 15 years and is unlikely (according to his manager) ever to be promoted due to his lack of professional qualification.

There are several regional training institutions largely specialized in preparing statisticians to various levels, and universities that include courses appropriate for statistical degrees. Evaluation reports are available on the Francophone institutes which have been heavily subsidized by the French government and the EU, but no information is readily available on the Anglophone institutes, which are of lower level, nor on offerings at the universities.

Entry to the degree-level institutes in Abidjan, Yaoundé and Dakar continues to be via a tough competitive exam system similar to that used for the French Grandes Ecoles, and the exam is still run from Paris by the Centre Européen de Statisticiens-économistes des pays en voie de Développement (CESD) (Gié and Decoster 2003, Assidon and Chevel 1993). The schools have disproportionately more students from the host countries where numbers of aspirants make it easier to organize classes to prepare for the entry-exam, but partially successful special arrangements are made to try to facilitate preparation by people from other countries.

Many of the teachers in the schools appear to be French technical assistants because the regular salaries offered are not high enough to attract African teachers. Degrees given at the end of studies are equivalent to Bachelors and Masters. The evaluations indicate that the large majority of graduates join the national statistical system of their country, although some are later attracted away by other more interesting opportunities.

The principal Anglophone educational institutions covering statistics are the Eastern Africa Statistics Training Centre in Dar-es-Salaam, the Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics at Makerere University (Uganda) and the Department of Statistics at University of Ibadan (Nigeria). All available studies that comment on the subject (e.g., CASD Task Force 2000, Edmunds 2005), as well as comments in the field, indicate that opportunities for overseas training, whether degree-level or more limited, have diminished and those that there are tend often to be linked to a particular project, which defines the

127 Part I Zambia 148-150

128 Part I Niger 170

129 Part I Zambia 91

130 Part II Rwanda 18; Liberia 171

131 Recent anecdotal evidence from PARIS21 suggests that Mali has few, if any qualified statisticians in its statistical office.

132 Part I Zambia 101; Part II Burkina Faso 132

133 Kibuka (2007) Page 19

precise field for which funds can be spent. There appears to be widespread agreement that it is important to rebuild the supply of financial support for student-chosen courses related to developing a person's capacities to work as a statistician.

4.10 Appropriate Methods and Tools

A basic necessary input to statistical capacity is the availability of appropriate methods and tools to produce statistics. There are a range of techniques with which statistical information can be collected, transmitted and analysed. It is not the case that a technique that is appropriate in one context will be appropriate in another. For example, in higher-income countries, it is appropriate to collect administrative data electronically from facilities, because these data can be sent automatically by email or an intranet. However, in other countries, there is not a culture of form filling and the communications infrastructure is less well developed, and an alternative collection method is required. Where postal systems are extremely poorly developed and transferring data regularly is difficult, it may be sensible to rethink the entire model of data collection. In another example, methods of measuring agricultural production need to account for the nature of that production: different crops may be appropriately measured in different ways; and different systems of production (multi-cropping, multiple seasons, subsistence, commercial, etc.) may require different data collection techniques.

Statistical capacity requires, therefore, that methods and tools appropriate to the country context are available at all. This is not always the case. Where these appropriate methods and tools are unavailable, a support to statistical capacity building needs to be directed to their development. This highly specific technology is to some extent an example of how statistics is unlike other sectors where capacity is built.[134] Its absence is common, especially outside central statistical offices. For example, the Cambodian Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries sought assistance in basic statistical techniques.[135] Basic infrastructure can also constrain statistical capacity building. For example, Bangladesh lacks computers and relies overly on paper methods.[136]

The transfer of appropriate methods and tools was considered to be a particularly important result of support, and this has largely been the focus of much of the technical assistance given in statistics. There are several very positive examples of support transferring or supporting the development of appropriate methods. These include support to Zambia's economic statistics and CS—Pro skills and regionally appropriate support to Niger from Afristat.[137] Niger's statistics institute and statistical units in line ministries have received training in statistical tools from several donors.[138] Rwanda's national statistical system has benefited from support to computer tools.[139] The International Household Survey Network supported Rwanda in archiving and disseminating a recent living conditions survey.[140] Support to Liberia from the International Price Comparison programme to make price data more internationally comparable had no practical impact on statistics in Liberia, but provided Liberia's statistical institute with its first computers since the war.[141] Transfer is best carried out in situ where methods can be adapted to local conditions and systems. Interviews with mid-level professionals suggested that a longer-term arrangement was the most productive, to enable staff to develop new systems for statistical production and to learn on the job. However, there have been less positive examples. Receiving know-how in workshops or brief missions was thought to be much less effective, as staff were unable to bring about reforms to their own systems lacking the IT skills, the autonomy or the problem solving skills in their own country context. There was some concern (though not particularly strong evidence) that twinning produced a bias towards 'northern' technical methods.[142] Finally, there are examples of donors supporting different technical methods for e.g. poverty assessment, confusing recipients and reducing the efficiency and effectiveness of support.[143]

4.11 Summary

To summarise our findings we developed a model of 8 components of statistical capacity. This forms the basis of the draft evaluation framework which follows.

134 Part I Sida 77

135 Part I Cambodia 195.

136 Part II Bangladesh 218.

137 Part I Zambia 148-150; Niger 170

138 Part I Niger 130, 131, 140, 171

139 Part II Rwanda 6.

140 Part I DFID 56.

141 Part I DFID 57.

142 Part I Sida 12.

143 See e.g. Part I Cambodia 104.

Box 4.1 Evaluation pillars

The components of the draft evaluation framework for statistics are as follows:
q = f, g, i, s, r, m, t, a

Where:
q = statistical capacity
f = results based focus – government subscribes to results based management
g = governance structure of NSS which sets priorities, policies, agrees performance and holds the NSS producer agencies to account, and is accountable itself to a higher authority
i = appropriate institutional environment for reform
s = strategy, master plan or work programme around which statistics can be aligned
r = funds, equipment, premises
m = managing of processes, application of quality principles, codes, managing staff, NSS
t = trained professional staff,
a = appropriate methods and tools

5 The Draft Evaluation Framework

The results of the evaluation summarised by the DAC evaluation criteria, Paris Declaration Principles and the development of the pillars of capacity building can be arranged together as a draft evaluation framework. This is set out below in Table 5.1. This could be used for a diagnostic of the whole statistics sector, but also used to evaluate support to particular components. It is worth repeating that a holistic approach to supporting weaknesses in all pillars will be needed to improve capacity.

The first column sets out the DAC evaluation criterion to which the evaluation question is relevant. The second sets the question in the context of the Paris Declaration and the third is the evaluation question itself. The last column is the potential source of information needed to monitor performance.

Table 5.1 The Draft Evaluation Framework

Evaluation Criterion	Paris Declaration	Question	Information Source
Owner: Results Focus promoted at highest levels of government			
Relevance	Results focus Ownership	Is there a chapter relating to statistics in the PRSP or National Development Plan	PRSP Documentation
Relevance	Results focus	Does support by partners include capacity building among users in the use, analysis and interpretation of statistics	Project documentation
Relevance	Ownership Results focus	To what extent do objectives and targets of support focus on: • Statistical outputs • Capacity building and reform • Use of statistics	Project documentation
Effectiveness	All	Is statistics included in the Joint Assistance Strategy as a separate sector	JAS documentation
Effectiveness	Alignment	Do national/ sector monitoring systems take account of availability of data	Documentation of monitoring system Interviews with statistical and monitoring staff
Effectiveness	Results focus Mutual accountability	Was the key information needed to evaluate the Development Plan included in the statistical strategy	Government analytical reports and statistical strategy
Effectiveness	Mutual accountability Harmonisation	Is a report on the state of the statistical system presented to Cabinet or Parliament	Government documentation

Evaluation Criterion	Paris Declaration	Question	Information Source
Effectiveness	Results focus	Are official statistics readily available from websites or from other accessible information points?	Website, publications offices, statistical outlets.
Effectiveness Impact	Results focus Mutual accountability	Do poverty surveys and other outputs meet PRSP and other policy, development strategy deadlines?	Joint (IMF Bank) staff reviews, progress reports
Impact	Results focus	Was the PRSP or National Development Plan drafted using results and are these findings referred to in PRSP or supporting documentation?	Government documentation Unfavourable statistics reported on by media and/or civil society
Impact	Results focus	Is progress in PRSP demonstrated by data and statistics?	PRSP progress reports
Impact	Results focus	Are statistics and data presented in a usable form?	Formal user needs studies Interviews with stakeholders Public data and metadata access available
Sustainability	Ownership	Proportion of budget for national statistical system funded by Government?	Budgetary information, government finance statistics
Statistical Governance: Are the statistical agencies accountable for performance to their governments?			
Relevance	Mutual accountability	Is there a Board or Council provided for in the statistical law?	Statistical laws
Effectiveness	Results focus	How often does the Board or Council meet?	Documentation of statistical governance body
Effectiveness	Mutual accountability	Does the governance body responsible have effective authority over statistical managers?	Terms of reference for the body, or statistical legislation
Impact	Mutual accountability	Does the statistical agency publish an annual programme of work and outputs in advance?	Documentation, website
Impact	Results focus	Does the governance body oversee performance and report on it to higher authorities?	Strategy, work plans and reports from Board
Impact	Results focus	Does the governance body include key users of statistics and decision- makers?	Composition of Board
Efficiency Sustainability	Harmonisation	If reporting systems are not used – what support has been given to strengthening reporting systems?	Project documentation, Board minutes, annual reports.
Efficiency Sustainability	Harmonisation	How many parallel project units, bank accounts, reporting systems are used by donors?	Analysis of information systems and interviews with donors and statistical managers
Efficiency	Harmonisation	Do the external partners utilise and support the same reporting systems as used by the Board?	Project documents, project reports
Efficiency	Harmonisation	Are there joint donor missions on statistics?	Interviews with donors and statistical managers
Enabling institutional context: Is the statistical institution organised so as to be able to undertake the work programme envisaged in the strategy?			
Relevance	Results focus Mutual accountability	Is the statistical agency able to quality control all official statistics from providers?	Provision made in statistics laws for oversight of statistics by government statistical agency
Relevance Efficiency Sustainability	Results focus	Are the appropriate number and type of human resources available to undertake the activities planned?	Strategy, work programme and establishment records

Evaluation Criterion	Paris Declaration	Question	Information Source
Effectiveness	Results focus	Is management able to make changes to the internal structure of the agency?	Public service reform. Interviews with appropriate public service officials and statistical managers
Effectiveness	Results focus	Is management able to promote, appoint and reward statistical staff?	Public service regulations. Human resource records. Interviews with statistical managers.
Effectiveness	Results focus Harmonisation	Are statistical coordination mechanism in place and operational in the national statistical system?	Memoranda of understanding or other agreements between government producers in place. Evidence of coordination from minutes of working parties or other coordination mechanisms
Efficiency	Results focus	Are staff adequately motivated to undertake their duties?	Records of performance management systems, human resources (promotion, appointments and resignations)
Sustainability	Effectiveness	Is a career path for statistical staff clearly identified?	Human resource and training plans published
Sustainability	Effectiveness	What are staff attrition rates?	Human resource records
Statistical strategy: Is there an appropriate, credible, government owned statistical strategy being used by partners?			
Relevance	Ownership	Is there a statistical strategy?	Government documentation
Relevance	Ownership	Was the strategy fully owned and endorsed by • Sector ministries • Planning authorities and finance ministries • Civil society • Statistical governance bodies • Development partners forum?	Interviews with key informants and stakeholders
Relevance	Alignment Ownership	Was the statistical strategy developed in conjunction with country and sector development plans?	Analysis of documentation and interviews of stakeholders
Relevance	Alignment	Are donor activities aligned to partner statistical strategies?	Analysis of documentation, including country assistance plans and national plans
Relevance	Ownership	Which users' demands remain unsupported and how does this relate to ownership?	Analysis of existing documentation on support and budget
Relevance	Ownership Alignment	Are decisions on support made in the particular country context?	Analysis of key strategy documents, interviews with key government personnel
Effectiveness	Alignment	Is the statistics strategy/workplan aligned with (PRSP or other) monitoring strategy?	Analysis of donor programmes and PRSP monitoring strategy. Key informant interviews
Effectiveness	Mutual accountability	Are planned outputs and work programmes published and reported upon?	Website, annual reports, GDDS
Impact	Alignment	Are activities not envisaged in the plan undertaken?	Interviews, annual report, DAC reporting system
Efficiency	Harmonisation Mutual accountability	Are there joint donor/ government reviews of support?	Donor review documents, interviews

Evaluation Criterion	Paris Declaration	Question	Information Source
Resources secured: Is the funding secured to undertake the work envisaged in the strategy and associated work programmes for the period of the strategy?			
Effectiveness?	Alignment	Is the statistical strategy completely funded?	Documentation and interviews
Effectiveness	Harmonisation	Do donors have common views on statistics? Do they speak with one voice?	Documentation and minutes from donor meeting on statistics. Interviews
Efficiency Relevance	Alignment	Is the infrastructure appropriate for the strategy and workplan?	Interviews with key informants and stakeholders
Efficiency	Mutual accountability	Are statistical systems supported with predictable funding?	Interviews with key informants and stakeholders
Efficiency	Mutual accountability	Are funds delivered to plan?	Interviews with key informants and stakeholders
Efficiency	Harmonisation	What use is made of common funds?	Documentation and interviews
Sustainability	Mutual accountability	Over what time period are the funds secured?	Documentation and interviews
Management of the NSS			
Relevance	Alignment	Have statistical managers received management training	Records of training attended
Relevance Impact	Mutual accountability	Have user satisfaction studies been undertaken and have results been acted upon?	Results of user satisfaction surveys available
Relevance	Mutual accountability	Are coordination mechanisms in place across the national system of producers?	Legal framework Memoranda of understanding Minutes of working parties
Efficiency	Alignment	Is a timetabled, resourced work programme used to plan work streams and resources?	Availability of detailed work programmes
Efficiency		Have unit cost benchmarks for statistical activities been established, to establish the comparative advantages of different methods (e.g. strengthen MIS or surveys)?	Cost benchmarks available
Impact	Mutual accountability	Have performance management systems been introduced for the statistical agencies?	Results of performance management systems
Impact	Results focus	Are the estimates from NSS producers quality assured and differences explained?	Websites Publications User feedback
Trained staff: Are there sufficient staff qualified / trained to undertake tasks?			
Relevance	Ownership	What training and skills needs have been identified?	TA supplied according to training and skills needs identified
Sustainability	Ownership	Have training needs been established and training plans developed?	Staff trained to meet needs identified
Sustainability	Alignment	Do training programmes meet the long-term needs of the statistical system	Training plan available and supported
Appropriate tools and methods: Do the statistical agencies have the tools and methods needed to produce the statistics to the quality standards required?			

Evaluation Criterion	Paris Declaration	Question	Information Source
Relevance	Ownership	Have the needs for appropriate tools and methods been identified in the strategy?	Technical support provided to support identified needs
Effectiveness	Alignment	Have skills in techniques been transferred to staff?	Evidence of new tools and techniques being used by statistical staff
Efficiency	Results focus	What are the most suitable tools and techniques in use?	Comparative costs of data collection and processing are available to managers
Sustainability	Ownership	Are methods and techniques fully documented in country?	Methodological documentation and metadata available.
Overarching issues			
Effectiveness	Harmonisation	How frequent and effective is dialogue between partner governments and donors?	Meeting minutes
Relevance	Alignment	Is the support focused on all framework pillars? If not, what gaps remain?	Analysis of documentation and information systems

6 Analysis of Support to Statistical Capacity

6.1 Overview and Forms of Support

This study is intended to contribute to improving support to statistical capacity building and the results agenda. It is hoped that the evidence and frameworks above will be useful to that end, and it is worth very briefly summarising the key lessons here. Support to statistical capacity building in previous years has concentrated on only a few pillars of statistical capacity. The exception to this in recent years has been a few larger programmes that have been more effective in covering the organisational and institutional components. We can find examples of the successes of these larger and more comprehensive programmes in Niger and Uganda, amongst other places.[144] These larger programmes combine long-term resident technical assistance, short-term technical assistance where required, funding and resources across the statistical system, and advocacy. Typically, however support is more focused. For example, support to data collection and production has been effective, particularly in supporting surveys, and we have detailed numerous examples of success on this narrow agenda in almost every country studied.[145] Focused support to relevant areas, such as data collection, is clearly desirable. However, the problem is that this focus often comes with the relative neglect of other key areas. In particular, support to the use of statistics and its integration into policy processes, support to sector ministry statistical systems, and support to the broader statistical environment have been relatively weak. In short, the technical aspects of statistics currently receive most emphasis in support to statistical capacity building.

In other sectors, capacity is seen as less technical and much more explicitly conceptualised along the individual/organisational/institutional lines noted above. It seems likely that in statistics the concentration of support to technical inputs relates to the extent to which statistics is looked upon as a technical service to be drawn on rather than a sector in which capacity should be built. It was suggested in Section 1 that application of the Paris Declaration principles can function as a useful correction to this tendency.

However, in order to improve support to statistical capacity building, it is also useful to look explicitly at the relative strengths and weaknesses of different elements of support. The Terms of Reference for this study explicitly require an indication of what types of support have worked, and what have not. This is a rather different – though of course closely related – exercise from the development of a draft evaluation framework conducted above. In this latter exercise, the previous chapters provided several indications and examples of successful and unsuccessful support. This section attempts to summarise those lessons for the major forms of statistical support used: technical assistance, support to surveys, twinning, and support to regional institutions.

6.2 Technical Assistance

Technical assistance (TA) is a dominant modality of support across the development spectrum. It is estimated that 30-40% of ODA is spent on TA. The evidence here, and that presented in the Global Forum on Development[146] suggests that the results of this vast spending are at best modest. At a very general level, a suggestion of this modesty comes from comparing changes in the World Bank's Statistical Capacity Indicators for Africa, which has received relatively high levels of TA, with the rest of the world. These indicators (subject to the caveats in paragraph 173) above show a 24% improvement in all countries since 1999 but only a 14% improvement in Africa, with the rate slowing down over the last few years.[147]

There are three major criteria that affect the effectiveness of TA. First, there is the relevance of the support's objectives. It is certainly true that many capacities have been built in country statistical offices through TA, particularly in the area of survey

144 See e.g. Part I Niger 164, DFID 82.

145 Part I Cambodia 94; Niger 132-133; Zambia 93; DFID 94; Sida 154

146 OECD Development Centre (2008) Global Forum on Development, 20 May 2008.

147 IMF (2008) para. 39.

implementation.[148] However, more and different skills in other areas are urgently required, and it is critical that partner country priorities are addressed by TA. There are examples in the case studies, particularly from Zambia, of technical assistants arriving in partner organisations with no clearly agreed mandate or task. This is clearly highly ineffective and inefficient. The involvement of partner countries in the specification of the terms of reference of the technical assistant is a very effective way of ensuring the TA is relevant to their needs. In Niger, for example, the ICT department in the NIS agrees terms of reference with donors and has had very positive experiences with TA.

Second, there is the appropriateness of the design of TA to the objective. One key element of design is length. Let us consider 'technical' issues first. If the technical objective is to rebase a series or redesign a system, short-term TA will almost never be able to do this and transfer the skills to make the changes sustainable. It must be recognised that there is often a trade-off between timeliness of results and the sustainable transfer of capacity, particularly skills. Staff in partner country agencies commonly lamented that technical assistants often made no effort to transfer skills, so that they had to procure repeated TA whenever they sought to make adjustments to the 'black box' that the TA had installed.[149] This was considered highly inefficient and limiting. On the other hand, Zambian and Nigerien staff had very positive experiences with long-term (several months or years) TA that deliberately developed new (or updated) systems and series in close collaboration with them.[150] This allowed the staff to understand and adjust (if not overhaul) the systems without further support from the technical assistant. Moreover, staff also reported success where short-term TA was designed in conjunction with the partner country agency to respond to a specific need (such as responding to a technical difficulty in the ICT department in Niger or installing a Geographical Information System in Zambia). It is critical, therefore, that a) capacity building vs data timeliness trade-offs are recognised, b) TAs have capacity building requirements written into their TORs, and c) the TORs are developed in close collaboration with partner organisations.

TA is also deployed to meet managerial or institutional needs, such as drafting a Statistics Law or developing a statistics strategy. In these cases too, the length of TA is critical. In some cases of strategy development, for instance, technical assistants are sometimes given unreasonably short time-frames to undertake the extremely wide consultation processes across the statistical system, fully integrate strategy development into national planning, obtain consensus, and draft and re-draft the strategy.[151] Strategy development is a highly complex process: it is vital that sufficient time is apportioned to this, or the resulting strategy will be poorly integrated into results planning. This has occurred to a greater or lesser degree in Zambia and Cambodia.

A second key design feature is the location of the TA. Some support programmes, notably the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), undertake analysis of the data outside the partner organisation or country. Again, this reflects a trade-off between timeliness (and perhaps cost) and skill transfer. Certainly, the DHS was mentioned by several statistical staff as a particularly unsatisfactory arrangement, although the data produced were considered useful, high quality, and timely. As reported above, analytical capacity is frequently weak in partner country statistical systems, and it may well be worth revisiting this trade-off.

The third criterion that influences the effectiveness of technical assistance is simply the characteristics of the technical assistant and their ability to work with partner country staff. This is of course a particularly difficult criterion to assess ex ante, and should therefore be considered a risk in TA. Evidence from the case studies suggests that many partner country staff had excellent experiences with technical assistances; equally, some had poor experiences. One way of offsetting the risk is to engage the partner country organisation in the hiring of the technical assistant, so that they view curriculum vitae and judge the likely quality of the candidates. This has worked successfully in Niger, and Zambia staff are attempting to secure funding to hire a computer consultant.[152]

In summary, TA can be an effective tool for support to statistical capacity building where consultation with partner countries, and a realistic appraisal of the task, ensures that it is relevant and appropriate, and where it explicitly aims to build capacity. The evidence presented above suggests that this is relatively rarely the case.

6.3 Support to Surveys

Survey support has been a key part of support to statistical capacity building. The production of data is clearly an important end in itself and a component of broader capacity building; and there is a good case that producing data nationally is a pre-requisite of analysing and using data. The balance of the evidence gathered, and the arguments above, suggest that in most countries now greater emphasis should be placed on those analytical and use elements. In part, this could be seen as indicative of successes in support to surveys. However, despite successes in support to surveys, there remain issues around the relevance of much of this support to partner country governments.

Conducting surveys involves the development of methodologies, data collection (fieldwork), entry and management techniques, and usually some preliminary analysis or tabula-

148 See e.g. Part I Cambodia 94; Niger 132-133; Zambia 93; DFID 94; Sida 154.

149 See e.g. Part I Zambia 91.

150 Part I Zambia 89.

151 It is feared, for example, that the current Zambia statistical strategy development process may be rather truncated.

152 Part I Zambia 89.

tion (though not always – in the DHS this is rarely done in partner countries). It seems that on balance, support has been particularly effective at developing data collection, entry, and management techniques.[153] Most statistical agencies reported significant improvements in their capacity to implement surveys as a result of TA, training, resources, and practice. It seems clear that support to these areas has been very successful.

There have also been improvements in methodology, though these have been subject to greater controversy and uncertainty, which is not surprising given the greater technicality of the subject. For example, the Cambodian poverty survey was until recently still embroiled in a debate (in which the World Bank, Sida, and UNDP at least were involved) over whether diary or recall methods were more appropriate. Statistical staff reported that this debate was confusing, though it seems clearly desirable – and an implication of Paris Declaration commitments – to hold the debate with statistical staff. Similarly, limited agreement on methodologies for conducting school or health surveys in Niger limits capacity building. On balance, however, the strong emphasis placed on support to surveys – particularly in statistical agencies – has improved their capacity to do so.

However, support to surveys has also often implicitly or explicitly not focused on sustainable capacity building in partner organisations, but on obtaining quality, timely, and internationally comparable data. This is a major problem of relevance. There may be a good case for conducting surveys in a rather extractive way, to ensure quality and consistency internationally. However, if the intention is not to raise capacity, or the capacity of the country is too low, or there are other competing demands inside the agency, then it may be better to be explicit about this. Alternatively surveys could be outsourced to academia or to the private sector. The evaluators noted that some of the early DHS surveys were conducted by universities or other agencies. The case for using the scarce resources of qualified civil servants in statistical agencies to collect data for external analysis is questionable, when there are other pressing country needs which are being neglected. As noted above, most case study countries have received extensive support for surveys (often social) where their own policymakers would have preferred support to economic series, administrative data systems, or analysis.

In several cases survey analysis was carried out abroad, or by consultants and while the data was used in country, little analytical capacity was built. We question whether government bodies should be used primarily as data collection agencies to the extent that they are now, and whether capacity constraints could be relieved by outsourcing fieldwork to external agencies. The role of the government in quality assurance, determining official statistics, maintaining regular series and so on would be key. There would of course be a negative impact on staff incentives, a problem which might be better solved by other means.

153 Part I Cambodia 94; Niger 132-133; Zambia 93; DFID 94; Sida 154.

One of the principal difficulties in negotiating this trade-off between capacity building and data production is that statistical agencies and their staff are often extremely willing to accept survey support. The main reason for this is that support to surveys offers opportunities to 're-tool' the organisation and provide the (usually very poorly paid) staff with valuable and needed per diems.[154] Moreover, so strong are these incentives that partner agency managers may accept funding for more surveys than are really feasible given the agency's capacity and need to produce and analyse other data and series. It is critical, therefore, that donors exercise restraint in funding surveys, limiting their support to those surveys that are agreed as crucial with partner country policymakers (not only statisticians). This restraint will be facilitated by – and will facilitate – the development of better accountability mechanisms from statistical agency to government.

A second key point on relevance is that support to surveys may – given scarce resources – limit the support available to routine data systems. Evidence from case studies shows that these are typically neglected relative to survey capacity,[155] although the support to the Education MIS in Zambia is a positive counter-example. On the one hand, regular systems do not produce internationally comparable data. On the other hand, staff involved in routine data collection usually lack the 're-tooling' and 'per diem' incentives of their colleagues in surveys. Moreover, statistical agencies involved in developing statistical strategies often focus on the activities of statistical agencies rather than sector ministries (this was evident particularly in Cambodia). However, administrative data are crucial to management for results – particularly for area-level policy adjustments that cannot be made on the basis of representative survey data, and for continuous flows of information for monitoring. It is very important in most countries that the balance of support to surveys and administrative data is redressed.

6.4 Twinning

Partly due to the happenstance that the Scandinavian governments have been more interested than most others in providing assistance on statistics and, in addition, are probably disproportionately represented in the sample that is comprised of the projects on which we happen to have been able to find studies, we have had occasion to review several examples of twinning. Twinning in the statistics field appears to mean fairly flexible provision of a wide range of services (a "comprehensive set of modalities for cooperation") by the foreign partner, in pursuit of a few agreed broad objectives but in response to quite short-notice demands. Liberal use tends to be made of study-tours, on-the-job training, and user-producer workshops. Gap-filling is undertaken only if local successors are already selected and in place.

154 E.g. Part I Cambodia 109 on per diems, 112 on survey based resource provision; Zambia 23 on survey-based resource provision, 112 on per diems.

155 Part I Cambodia 114, 127; Niger 90, 168; Zambia 151; Sida 92; Part II Tanzania 83.

Even in the 1990s directions taken in twinning were later reflected in the Paris Declaration, especially in regard to country ownership, leadership and decision-making (Gulloy and Wold 2004). Thus, the budget provided by the aid agency (for purchase of goods as well as hiring of people) is placed in the hands of the recipient, who has a large role (but not normally sole responsibility) in the selection of technical assistants, and can alter budget allocations though only on the occasion of the annual (or six-monthly) review meeting. The set-up of review meetings as described in the literature, is interesting because great effort is made to avoid appearance of joint donor-contractor impositions of any sort. On the first day of the annual meeting the beneficiary agency reviews programme progress with the contractor, with the representative of the aid agency (NORAD, for example) observing, while on the second day the beneficiary agency meets with NORAD, the contractor being present to observe and to back up the beneficiary as needed.

The literature suggests that experience shows twinning may be good for development of professional skills in a beneficiary agency, at the individual level, but has little utility beyond that. The model of twinning maintains that capacity building cannot be engineered from outside or imposed before trust has been established, but the large effort involved in a twinning commitment must be to do more than train some people. Indications are that long-run twinning in statistics has indeed done much more to develop an organization and the service it delivers than would have been obtained simply by advising and training some people, especially in the rather narrowly focused way that has become normal.

Scandinavians appear pleased when they have found signs that their statistical collaborators have turned into learning organizations, able to detect their own problems or weaknesses and to find promising solutions themselves. The Vietnamese General Statistics Office is deemed by Sida's evaluators to be one such body. A more recent twinning with very similar objectives, started only in 2003, is the joint Denmark-Norway-Sweden collaboration in support of Mozambique's Instituto Nacional de Estatística (Altvall and Uinge 2006).

The limits in the utility of twinning are in three directions. First, the focus on a specific statistical agency, while useful for building individual and sometimes managerial skills within the agency (and there are positive examples from Cambodia and the Sida case study), does not really facilitate action on the higher pillars. In part I of the case studies for this report, the Sida case study remarks in paragraph 92 that:

> "practically all the projects take a narrow approach, supporting primarily the statistical institutes, with the aim of strengthening their core production functions. Little or no emphasis has been given to supporting the other actors in the national statistical systems such as line ministries working with sector statistics and administrative data, or other relevant producers of statistics. Neither has support been given to the users of statistics…"

Statistical strategies and laws produced under the aegis of a twinning project are usually quite strongly directed from statistical agencies, which risks limiting the role of policymakers and representatives of other statistical units, such as sector ministries. One advantage of twinning is that the long time period means that these risks can often be offset, but they nevertheless persist.

The second limitation is that it is very difficult to find organisations that have development cooperation as a significant objective. Unless this is the case, staff involved in twinning are essentially removed from core objectives, which is difficult for managers to support. This was the case in Statistical Offices in the UK and Denmark, and it may be that Statistics Sweden, with a dedicated International Consulting Office, is almost unique.[156] Statistics Sweden benefits from an ideological commitment to development, and strong incentives for staff and managers to be involved in twinning projects (see Part I Sida case study for more details). Other potential organisations lack these supporting elements.

Finally, the sustainability of twinning projects remains open to question. The strong emphasis on training means that the individual capacity built is typically sustainable.[157] However, financial sustainability is less common. In Tanzania and Laos, for instance, substantial technical improvements were not matched by financial commitments from partner governments.[158]

6.5 Regional Initiatives

While the main focus of the evaluation framework will clearly be on capacity building at national level, it is important in many parts of the developing world also to take account of existing or potential regional institutions and to give attention to alternative strategies involving greater or lesser reliance on them. Africa's main regional economic bodies, such as COMESA, ECOWAS and SADC, are to varying extents active in matters connected with statistics; the UN Economic Commissions with many poor countries in their constituencies (notably the Economic Commission for Africa and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) recognize an important responsibility to promote cooperation and collaboration among member countries for upgrading of official statistics; and Africa has the rather unique regional support and promotion body AFRISTAT, based in Bamako and serving some 17 countries. The IMF also has a number of regional technical centres (RTACS), and a component of the GDDS programme in Africa was supported via a regional coordinator.

AFRISTAT, which was created with strong support from France and the European Union in the first half of the 1990s and has been fully operational since 1996, is generally considered, within its immediate region and more widely in Africa, as

156 Part I Sida 50-55.

157 Part I Sida 121.

158 Part I Sida 122.

a great success. A combined evaluation and reflection on its future was undertaken by consultants for the European Commission in 2003 (Watson et al., 2003). The organization's main accomplishments up to that time were: to have broken the isolation from which the national statistical offices of the many small member countries had come to suffer; to have achieved significant progress in harmonisation and therefore inter-country comparability of some key statistics for all the eight UEMOA (West African Monetary Union) countries; and to have developed and partially implemented (through training and technical assistance) an upgrade programme for a basic set of national economic statistics (PROSMIC) for its member countries.

While AFRISTAT appears never to have had more than about 12 full-time professional staff members, the evaluation implied that the effective constraint to the role it could play was set more by the limited human and financial resources of the member countries' statistical institutes (Watson et al., 2003. pp. 84-85). AFRISTAT was never intended to take over from those institutes which continue to have responsibility for production of any national statistics.

From the point of view of impact on economic policy and performance of a group of countries, probably the most interesting initiative undertaken by AFRISTAT is the PARSTAT programme (Programme d'appui regional à la statistique), developed at the request of the UEMOA Commission, financed by the European Union, and designed to help the UEMOA member countries manage their monetary and fiscal policies in consistency with their commitments within the Euro-linked UEMOA CFA-franc zone. Much of the work on harmonisation of price and GDP statistics was undertaken for these purposes. AFRISTAT's current five-year programme is maintaining support for past initiatives and also taking up subjects on which member countries pressed for more support at the time of the 2003 evaluation, including database and dissemination assistance, and institute organizational issues.

AFRISTAT leadership promotes the idea of creation of clones in other parts of Africa (Balepa 2006), and perhaps this would be an effective way to breathe more life into the aspirations of some of Africa's RECs to have technical assistance and a training body that would promote statistical harmonisation, south-south assistance, and saving on overheads for supply of such services to their member countries. AFRISTAT does not aspire to being the main, let alone the sole, channel of statistical assistance to its member countries, but it should be able normally to provide commonly used services less expensively than more distant sources, in addition to its role in facilitating cooperation among the countries. The IMF RTACs, though only of course partly devoted to statistics, and even DFID's earlier regional statistics advisers in some parts of Africa, played or play partly similar roles.

Our studies note that AFRISTAT's role has been very positive, but other regional bodies have been much less so. SADC was noted by our interviewees as a very useful place to exchange good practices and to harmonise methods.

The African Development Bank was a useful source of resources, and has strongly promoted NSDS initiatives, sometimes in cases where approaches to other international partners have failed. In more than one instance (Liberia and Sierra Leone) we found examples of duplication of activities, and sometimes of delays in providing support which can be characteristic of support provided by partners operating from locations beyond the country. Better coordination of regional support to statistics may be called for in the future.

The IMF's RTACs, were also very useful regional centres of support which contributed to the success of the relatively small contributions from the GDDS programme, by maintaining regular follow-up and technical support. The GDDS DFID Annual Review of 5/12/2007 noted

> "It has been notable how well integrated the GDDS project is within the IMF. IMF staff from a number of divisions are involved with the project often providing additional support for modules. Senior managers in the IMF have also shown a strong commitment to the project and maintained a strong interest in it. This has perhaps been easier for the IMF as the nature of their work is strongly aligned with the topics covered by the GDDS modules'. And on best practice: 'The project has a regional project manager based in Africa which is extremely helpful to maintain strong links with the national statistical offices".

6.6 Countries in Fragile Situations

The Board for this study expressed a wish for some recommendations on support to countries in fragile situations. This brief section looks explicitly at these countries. These countries are taken separately not only because of the wishes of the Board, but also because the team recommends that the approach taken in countries with a very low statistical base should differ slightly from the approach generally recommended in this report. This conclusion is not dissimilar to the conclusion of the Paris Declaration evaluation thematic study on countries in fragile situations.

Of the countries studied in this study, Liberia is most recently in conflict, but there is also historical evidence gained from Rwanda and Cambodia on the process of recovery of statistical functions following their wars. These three countries provide the basis for the lessons set out briefly below.

Countries emerging from conflict or crisis are generally coupled with very poor infrastructure and in many instances lack of suitably trained statistical staff. Data tends to be in very short supply, and management by results is difficult to achieve. Even where data exists, access may be restricted and may not serve the intended transparency and accountability objectives.

Although there are many capacity limitations in these states, perhaps the key issue for statistics is the strength of government support for managing for results. If this focus is missing at the top levels of government, then the environment for statistical capacity building will be inhospitable. Where this is missing the principles of effective aid will apply, and should not be set aside. Resources are scarce and alignment and harmonisation are very important. However the ownership of statistics and information is likely to be weak from the government side, and demand needs to be encouraged strongly by the development partners.

The lack of data, staff, infrastructure, and results focus mean that these countries are starting from a very low statistical base. There are very often, therefore, useful gains to be made from investment in basic infrastructure (even electricity and shelves in the case of Liberia) and training (still urgently required, for example, in Cambodia). At this extremely low level of statistical capacity, it probably matters less how these projects are implemented than that they are implemented, with minimal demands on partner country staff. In the case study countries, for instance, early wins for results were achieved largely by externally led surveys. More sustainable development was initiated by large scale training of staff and supporting a well supported population census. Sometimes formal long-term training was established very late – compromising numeracy and statistical focus in government.

The Swedish experience recommends the adoption of quite limited objectives for a first project. The independent evaluation of JICA's recent project in support of Myanmar's Central Statistical Organization (Kumagai et al. 2007) demonstrated achievement of much appreciated improvements in statistical techniques, survey methods and database management. But this was combined with continuing uncertainty as to whether the responsible Minister, and government more generally, would permit closer cooperation of the Central Statistical Organization with other government bodies and line ministries, and wider public access to the organization's web-site than in the past.

Possibilities can only be determined, however, on a case-by-case basis. Indications are, for example, that, even within the first phase of its recovery from political and economic collapse, Sierra Leone may have been able to move quite fast on the revival of its central statistical office. Already in 2002, when the civil war was receding, new Statistics and Census Acts were passed, and Statistics Sierra Leone was established as an autonomous agency (Kiregyera et al. 2006). A population census and an integrated household survey were carried out in 2004.

With harmonisation, rapid progress can be made. Liberia, with good donor collaboration and an agreed roadmap, quickly carried out DHS surveys, and followed this with a CWIQ survey (both externally supported surveys). This was quickly followed by a population census, which was able to report its preliminary results within a few months of enumeration – thus re-establishing capacity. Humanitarian workers were used in the latter stages to collect basic information, to start to re-establish economic statistics, and regional support has been instrumental in making initial reforms to the CPI and other key series.

In both Sierra Leone and Liberia the Humanitarian Information Centres, established during the conflict to provide information to those providing humanitarian assistance, were retained as almost statistical support centres to the emerging statistical office. There have been some questions raised as to whether this was the most efficient use of funds; while they have provided much needed technical resources, their highly paid staff may prove difficult to absorb into the government system.

In inhospitable statistical environments, where the government has a weak results focus, the actions and activities of cooperating partners will need to be different from those where there is a results focus established at the highest level. Accountability, reform and improved statistical management are unlikely to be a high priority with government authorities.

Alignment, harmonisation, mutual accountability and a results focus are necessary to ensure that all support focuses on the key priorities without duplication. Emerging ownership by and accountability to governments should be supported by increasing ownership of the agenda and by responding quickly to their information needs.

Donor sponsored information centres have been established in some post conflict situations, and these need to be very carefully integrated with government statistical agencies to ensure an efficient transfer of skills and the use of scarce infrastructure by the government authorities.

In conflict-affected states data may be considered very sensitive, and access may be restricted. Where data collection activities have been supported by development partners, issues of data access and availability should be discussed and agreed on at the planning stages with the governments concerned.

The general lessons in countries starting with a very low statistical base are therefore quite simple: harmonised donors can achieve rapid results if they start with basic statistical needs, both in terms of data (a census, CPI, etc.) and capacity (infrastructure and training). Often, externally driven fieldwork that we would ordinarily not recommend can be a useful 'kick-start' to statistical processes. It is also important, however, to have a close analysis of the possibilities in each (very different) conflict- or crisis-affected situation. Table 6.1 sets out some key lessons for statistical capacity building in countries in fragile situations.

Table 6.1 Lessons for statistics in countries in fragile situations

Statistics required may need to be obtained by largely externally led processes. CWIQ and DHS surveys proved particularly useful in contexts where the local skills base is low and results are required rapidly.
Establish basic statistical infrastructure, particularly a population census and associated mapping activities. A census is vital because: • without a census samples cannot be selected for surveys; • without a census no denominators exist for estimating MDG indicators; • sub-national resource allocation and service delivery depends on good population data. Population information is extremely difficult to estimate where there are large numbers of displaced persons; and • a population census equips a statistical agency with many of the skills and infrastructure it needs for other statistical activities.
Re-establish statistical training schools quickly in countries emerging from conflict. These will provide the qualified staff needed to develop a results focus in the country.
Some of the most pressing needs for governments are likely to be statistics for economic and financial management, particularly the consumer price index and these should be supported as a priority.

7 Further Evidence Required—Phase 2

This study has been directed at providing a draft evaluative framework with which to assess support to statistical capacity building. This has been developed by providing indications of the sorts of support that have been effective, and by an analysis of the effect of the Paris Declaration on this support. This limited remit clearly leaves questions unanswered. This section offers suggestion for further research by way of conclusion.

The draft evaluation framework needs some calibration—how will a good attribute be recognised from those that are not so good? The study starts to draw some conclusions, and provides evaluation questions to indicate good practice, but on the basis of only eight countries, five only lightly covered, more evidence may be required.

7.1 An evaluation of Support to Statistical Capacity Building

The principal application of this draft framework would be to perform an evaluation of support to statistical capacity building. This could involve the selection of cases on a more rigorous and more comprehensive basis than was permitted here. This basis could involve clear differences in the extent to which Paris Declaration principles were adhered to in the support, and clear differences in the effectiveness of the support. The framework could then be applied to specific instances in different country contexts (chosen on the basis of differences in the inputs identified here) to undertake a detailed evaluation of support. This evaluation would enable better investment decisions in support, and would test the indications outlined in this study.

It would also provide some benchmarks for each of the pillars, and indicate the contexts in which they are effective. There are still some puzzles unsolved, and the case for the applicability of the draft framework in Asia is still too weak (Cambodia & Bangladesh only); whilst for transition countries, and those in central and south America and the Caribbean, the draft framework is yet to be tested.

7.2 Costs

Since so little work appears to have been done to pull together comparative costs of statistical activities, it would seem highly desirable that the further work towards a framework for assessment of statistical capacity building projects includes some efforts on cost accounting—to establish sound definitions for the kinds of costs involved and to gather a small initial inventory of illustrative information from developing countries with superior financial records. Besides its use for purposes of planning and evaluating, as mainly focused here, it is believed that financial information of this sort would add measurably to the value and utility of debates among users about priorities; and hence, quite likely, provide useful support for statistical services in budgetary deliberations. It would also respond to the World Bank's complaint about the frequently weak coverage of costs and budgets in National Statistics Development Strategies (World Bank 2006).

Proper reflection of Paris Declaration considerations (and the importance of statistics for results-based management generally) in planning for statistical capacity building indicates that such planning work should be strongly guided by a country's Ministry of Finance (or, in some government structures, Planning). Presentations of SCB projects would include better treatment of cost-benefit considerations than seems typically to have applied in the past, benefiting from cost-accounting work of the type just mentioned. They would also give deeper consideration to the effects that would be expected to accrue from availability of the improved statistics, and to the measures included in the project to try to ensure materialization of such benefits.

Outcomes sought from an SCB project would thus be defined in terms of both the data gathering, processing and disseminating capacities to be built and the sorts of decision improvements that would be expected to result from the availability of such data. Indication would be given of the types or groups of people who would be responsible for making, advising on, and contributing to relevant classes of decision, and of the significance of the issues that would be at stake.

There does appear to be very widespread support for the large role that might be played by sector-wide National Statistical Development Strategies to help secure a better development pattern and one that applied quite fully the principles urged in the Paris Declaration. But Asia seems to be less convinced about this potential than Africa. And developments seem to need close overview and follow-up to make sure the NSDSs of this century do not fall ineffective and out-of-date, as apparently occurred with many of the Statistics Master Plans of the 1990s, especially in Africa.

7.3 Capacity Constraints

With the higher level of demand for official statistics now, there is greater need for serious planning that tries realistically to establish costs of desired activities and the overall budgets that are truly likely to be available, and that seriously confront the prioritisation task. It is really not very sound to be adopting particular approaches to generating data because they will attract foreign-aid funds to supplement inadequate staff salaries, let alone to be selecting on similar criteria the subject-areas to cover. Few things could be more contrary to the spirit and intentions of the Paris Declaration. There are indications that Tanzania has been able to handle these issues relatively well over the last five years or so, mainly by a combination of disciplined management decision-making, with donor financial contributions for statistics taking mainly the form of funds provided as a fixed percentage of overall budget support, and earmarked only for statistics in general, the destination within the statistics field being left to the managers.

This links to the issue of capacity bottlenecks. It is not clear what would be a reasonable workload for a statistical agency of a particular size. Anecdotal evidence from the PARIS21 Peer Review process suggests that some offices are over resourced and others very lean. Two of our case studies include two of the leanest and both perform reasonably well, but under conditions of higher demand, will they be able to cope given the small number of trained staff they have? Strategies to unblock bottlenecks are urgently needed.

7.4 Research into Paris Declaration Principles

It has been apparent in this study that ownership is crucial to effective support to statistical capacity building. However, the concept is extremely complicated. As noted, ownership in national statistics should not mean consent of the statistical office, but democratic ownership of the statistical users within the country ranging from government ministries to individual citizens. Little is known about how this ownership can be generated or even measured. Since this is a critical constraint to the effectiveness of much support to statistical capacity building, it would be advisable to undertake further research in this area.

> Much more work is required about what kinds of data each type of user typically needs. It is only with this kind of analysis that priorities can be realistically set.

7.5 Capacity—How is it Measured?

There are several important indicator systems on which this report has built. The team understands that this is the subject of some ongoing work in the World Bank (World Bank 2008). This needs very careful consideration from the point of view of all users, and from the point of view of the impact of the results. Are the results used and what are the country's capacities for using them? It is hoped that the proposed indicators will go further than data availability to include use.

The DQAF and the related PARIS21 indicators of statistical capacity provide extremely useful attempts to measure capacity. Furthermore, there have been several papers associated with different organisations that have attempted with some success to apply these indicators and develop similar systems for country, regional, or global application (Laliberté 2002; European Commission 2005; Defays and Laliberté 2006; Eurostat 2008). The present report has drawn lessons from these attempts and from the DQAF. It aims in part to respond to their concerns that finding indicators to include broader features of the statistical system is problematic. The pillars and the draft evaluation framework above attempt to clarify and explicate what is implicit in these previous attempts. The team hopes that the present report can contribute to moving forward this body of work.

8 Recommendations to Improve Support to Statistical Capacity Building

This section collects and summarises some of the main recommendations on improving support. These recommendations derive from the findings and draft framework presented above and in the case studies. Many of them reflect a need to further meet Paris Declaration commitments.

It is very important that support to statistical capacity building is made more relevant to the needs and priorities of partner country governments. At a general level, this involves:

- More support to capacities to analyse and use data.
- More support to administrative data systems in sector ministries.
- More support to improving data accessibility.
- More support to the upper pillars, to improve the:
  - Results focus
  - Accountability
  - Institutional environment
  - Management.

It is very likely that out of these elements, it will be evident in most countries that higher levels of statistical ability are necessary. This could be very well supported by:

- Investing in increasing the supply of trained statistics through investments in statistical schools or in funding students.
- Supporting capacity development in other national organisations with statistical capacity, such as research institutes, academia and non-government organisations.

All support to statistical capacity building should be compliant with Paris Declaration commitments where support involves any activities in partner countries. Particularly, support should involve:

- Much closer consultation with partner country governments and institutions about the scope and nature of support.

This is true on a small scale: technical assistants' Terms of Reference and the technical assistants themselves are best decided upon in collaboration with the institution receiving the technical assistance. This will help to ensure that it is relevant to their needs and appropriate to their objectives. It is also true on a large scale: a detailed in country analysis of capacity bottlenecks is necessary before a programme of support to capacity building is designed.

To achieve this, it will be necessary to:

- Recognise explicitly a possible trade-off between timely, quality, internationally comparable data and sustainable capacity building.
- Recognise explicitly that although most data is quite useful to everyone, donor organisation statistical *priorities* (including reporting to their own governments or boards on progress against e.g. MDGs) may differ from partner country statistical *priorities* (including having available economic series or facility-level data).

Once these things are recognised and made clear in negotiations around support programmes, partner countries may be better able to stipulate which support they consider essential, and which they do not. A crucial tool for setting out these priorities is a statistical strategy. This is an important element of capacity and should be supported. However, it is not useful to have a strategy that is poorly integrated into policy processes and data user needs, and that neglects key statistical units outside the statistical office. In order to improve the alignment of statistical strategies with policy processes, and to support more holistic strategies, it is important to:

- Give sufficient support to long-term, broad statistical strategy development.
- Ensure that statistics strategies are always fully integrated into national planning processes, and not conducted separately.
- Support strategies once prepared, and not to deviate from their contents or pick favourite items to support.
- Ensure that sector-wide approaches to statistics are taken. This could be facilitated by:

- A statistics 'basket' or 'common fund' to which all donors in statistics contribute.
- Including statistics in Joint Assistance Strategies.

These recommendations emphasise the need for **ownership, harmonisation, alignment, mutual accountability, and managing for results.** These are not surprising recommendations: they echo international agreements in the Paris Declaration and at the Marrakech Roundtable on development results, amongst other places. The problem is that these agreements are currently not always respected. In order to improve support to statistics, they must be respected.

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TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR CONSULTANTS

DFID Department: Evaluation Department

Title: EVALUATION OF SUPPORT TO STATISTICAL CAPACITY BUILDING

Planned Date: January 2008 – June 2008

Background

Reliable statistics are needed to make policy, measure progress and report on development results at international, national and local levels. The issues of weak statistical capacity and the impact that has on development processes and aid effectiveness is well documented.

'Mutual accountability' and 'managing for results' are cornerstones of the Paris declaration. At the third International Round Table on Managing for Development Results in Hanoi, participating county teams identified inadequate investment in statistics as a key constraint on managing for better development results and gave strong support to the Marrakech Action plan for Statistics (MAPS). Both the second and third round table and the follow up meeting in Washington in April 2007 agreed that reliable and timely statistics are essential for improving development results and aid effectiveness

The results round table is one of the 8 Round Tables in the Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness. The 2006 survey on monitoring the Paris Declaration points out the importance of statistical systems and the increased interest from governments in strengthening these.

Across countries, there are a wide range of structures used for national statistical systems. In some countries the National Statistics Office (NSO) coordinates and manages the production and dissemination of all national statistics. In others, there is a key ministry (e.g. Office of the Prime Minister or Ministry of planning) with responsibility for coordinating the production and use of national statistics; and in some, there is limited coordination and each Ministry produces statistics for their own and wider use.

Increasingly, more and more countries are developing national plans or strategies for the development of statistics. This tool is being used to document planned statistical production and highlight resources and support required to implement these plans. Across countries these plans vary. Some include the production of all national statistics (including statistics produced by the NSO, Ministries of Health, education, gender, industry, trade, transport etc.); others are limited to the work of the NSO.

The support development partners give to statistics likewise varies. Some development partners focus on support to national planning processes, others prefer to fund particular products and some developing 'twinning' arrangements, for example. Although there have been a number of reviews carried out by development partners relating to support to statistical capacity building (SCB) and the strengthening of national statistical strategies, there is no clear evidence of what works and what does not. A review of models of technical assistance for statistical development[159] concluded 'the evidence to date is sparse; it does not appear to favour one approach for delivering technical assistance over another. Indeed the evidence in some areas is conflicting'.

There is some evaluation evidence available. For example, The African Capacity Building Foundation report 'Strengthening national statistical systems in Sub-Saharan Africa' highlights good practices which led to improved statistical capacity in Uganda. However country level evidence of what works and what does not is very limited indeed. Reviews conducted by development partners tend to be limited to their own work. There is virtually no evidence which compares different modalities in different country situations.

Despite the clear evidence gap, development partners are increasingly funding support to national statistics systems. In the absence of clear understanding of the most appropriate approaches, funding remains channelled in a range of different and not always coordinated ways. There is thus a real need and great demand for evidence which looks at what works

159 A review of models of technical assistance for statistical development, Paris 21 (This paper is provisional)

most effectively and what types of support are sustainable in different countries.

Support for this study

PARIS21, a key coordinator and body with excellent contacts in the field of statistics, which represents several partner countries development partners, is very supportive of this study and committed to providing assistance to implement this work.

Overall Objectives

This study has two broad objectives:

- To develop a framework that can evaluate different types of statistical interventions in different country contexts
- To document existing evidence regarding what type of support to statistical capacity building is most effective and sustainable, to feed into the High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Accra (September 2008).

Scope of work and methodology

As with the wider Paris Declaration evaluation, this thematic study will look at statistical capacity building from both the country and the development partner perspectives. Involvement of partner countries will be through a reference group and, through organisation of and participation in country studies. Country studies will be based on a desk review. More in-depth evidence should be sought through fieldwork in two African and one Asian country.

Evaluation questions

The overarching question which this study aims to try and address is:
What development partner approaches to statistical capacity building have been most effective in different circumstances and why?

Evidence from the following more specific questions will be used to try and explore this high level question. It is not expected that this study will produce a definitive answer that shows the most effective approach in every situation, however it should prove a useful first step along the route to addressing this key issue and help focus development partner attention on the need to work further together in this area.

a) What types of approaches to SCB are used in different country contexts?
b) Which approaches are most valued by partner countries and development partners, and why?
c) What is the relationship between approaches taken (including levels of expenditure) and improved performance? (For example: What are the reasons for rapid increases in statistical capacity identified in some countries with development partner support? Why has statistical capacity not appeared to rise notably in some countries with development partner support?)

The consultants will conduct a desk review of existing development partner assessments, two donor case studies and three country case studies. will:

Provide a global picture of:

- What support is provided by development partners to improve the production and use of statistics? Support should be broken down by country, development partners and type. What are the most common approaches in statistics assistance?
- What different modalities or approaches are used to identify and deliver statistical support requirements, including development partner alignment under national statistical strategies or corporate plans, twinning arrangements, specific requests for national governments etc.?
- What factors (e.g. governance, political, donor support) lead to capacity development of statistical systems? What do stakeholders perceive as the most important contributing factors?
- What does statistical capacity look like to different stakeholders? What do different development partners and country partners define as or perceive as improved statistical capacity building?
- What are the common lessons identified from evaluations of support to statistical capacity?
- Which countries have national statistical planning tools (NSDS, statistics master plan, corporate plan etc)? How are they used? Do they have budgets? Are their budgets linked to national budgets and do they include funding requirements, or funding allocations? Are they Government owned? Are they being implemented? What value is placed on national statistical planning tools?
- Is development partner support harmonised in the statistical sector?

For a limited number of countries:

- (Are there links between demand and supply of statistical information? (Given the limitations of this study, user needs should focus on one area e.g. PRS monitoring).
- (Is there Government buy in for evidence based policy making?
- Are statistical producers, at the country level harmonised?
- (Are donors harmonised at the country level?

The review of available evaluations will include the evaluation conducted by France in the early 1990s which led to them supporting the establishment of AFRISTAT, subsequent evaluations of AFRISTAT; IMFs evaluation of their TA; European Commission's recent evaluation of their statistical support; and Norway's review of ten years of statistical cooperation. The desk review will also cover evaluations of projects, including those conducted within twinning arrangements.

Other relevant literature includes the light touch evaluation of PARIS21, the review of the World Bank trust fund, review of the IMF's GDDS, a review of PRS monitoring called "Beyond the numbers"

This literature review will be complemented by two development partner studies to identify support currently being provided, modalities used to identify needs and processes to harmonise and align support.

It is proposed, in this first phase, to select two country case studies and conduct an in-depth analysis of support received, outcomes, (impact?) from project reviews and views of partner governments. The evaluation will cover the National Statistical System if possible, and at the very least, the National Statistical Office.

For areas which can not be studied in depth, in this first phase, consultants should include hypothesis of how the issues can be addressed in the second phase of this study.

Expected Deliverables

An inception report outlining options for an initial framework, setting out the main approach, specific questions for country and development partner case studies; and the logic behind the options proposed. . The inception report must be presented by February 4th 2008 in electronic format plus 5 hard copies.

One in-depth country case study should be completed by the end of February and a second by the end of March. All country and donor case studies should be completed by the end of April and the draft report is also expected by the end of April 2008.

The final approved report is expected by end May 2008. A specific summarised paper for Accra to be finalised by June 2008.

Competency and Expertise Requirements

The consultants will require expertise and experience in five main areas:

- Statistical capacity building and monitoring systems; good understanding of national statistics offices and country monitoring systems, international statistical systems, different modalities used by development partners to provide support in this area. At least two team members must be expert in this area.
- Institutional evaluation / organisational analysis skills.
- Familiarity with evaluation issues including the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria, evaluation approaches, cost-effectiveness analysis and the analysis of resource allocation decisions are also essential skills for this work.
- (Presentation of findings: the team leader/ report drafters must demonstrate the ability to write clearly in plain English, free from jargon, and the team must contain at least one presenter with experience of presenting findings to a policy audience.
- (Country case studies for the evaluation are being considered at present. The team will need to organise their own work and logistics.
- (Experience conducting research, reviews and evaluations in developing countries.
- (Fluency in English and French.

Thematic Study of Support to Statistical Capacity Building

The Paris Declaration of Aid Effectiveness (2005) poses important challenges to the world of development cooperation. It is based on the simple but important assumption that aid will be more effective if the actions and behavioural changes listed as commitments under the five principles (ownership, alignment, harmonisation, managing for results and mutual accountability) are undertaken, and less if they are not.

This thematic study was commissioned as a contribution to a joint evaluation of Paris Declaration commitments undertaken in 2008. The Paris Declaration evaluation involved case studies of 19 countries and agencies, and thematic analyses of key aspects of the Paris Declaration principles[1]. This study considers how some countries (Cambodia, Niger, Zambia, and (desk-based study only) Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Liberia, Rwanda and Tanzania), and development partners (DFID and Sida) have sought to manage more effective donor collaboration in support of their national statistics institutions – helping them to manage more effectively for development results, and to implement evidence-based and targeted policies.

The study seeks to inform future government and development partner strategies for statistics, given the increasing emphasis on the role of reliable statistics for policy making, for measuring progress and for reporting on development results.

It develops a draft framework for evaluating support to statistical capacity building in the context of the Paris Declaration, and considers over 15 years of support to establish lessons from past and current practices. It aims to answer the overarching question:

"What development partner approaches to statistical capacity building have been most effective in different circumstances and why?"

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Chair, Statistical Capacity Evaluation Management Board

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[1] All are available on the OECD DAC evaluation website.

Published by the Department for International Development on behalf of the Paris Declaration Evaluation and the DAC Fragile States Group

ISBN : 1 86 192 963 3

Ownership, Alignment, Harmonisation, Results and Accountability

High Level Forum
Paris ■ February 28 – March 2, 2005

Joint Progress Toward Enhanced Aid Effectiveness

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