



# **A First National Strategy for the Development of Statistics in Belize**

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# Background

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Statistical Institute of Belize was established in 2007 (SIB Act, 2006) as the autonomous national statistical agency of Belize

In addition to authorizing the SIB to collect data from any individual or agency for purposes of producing official national statistics, the Act **mandates that the SIB serve as coordinator for the National Statistical System (NSS) and provide oversight and guidance** for all activities with statistical implications carried out by agencies within the NSS

# Background

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Previous attempt to organize Belize's NSS and develop a National Strategy for Development of Statistics (NSDS) was made in 2011-2012.

Was unsuccessful due to resource limitations within the SIB to fully carry the process forward.

- Government of Belize's medium term Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy – SIB provides technical oversight for Monitoring & Evaluation function
- Sustainable Development Goals reporting requirements
- Growing demand from producers of statistics in government ministries and departments for capacity development
- Growing demand from external agencies and organizations for timely, relevant, reliable, accurate data

- Establishment of NSS as key strategic area for the SIB in its strategic plan for 2016-2020
- Small size and limited resources of the SIB

Highlighted the urgent need to build the country's NSS in order to meet the demands being placed on the system and led to SIB's second attempt to organize the NSS.

# TASC Assessment

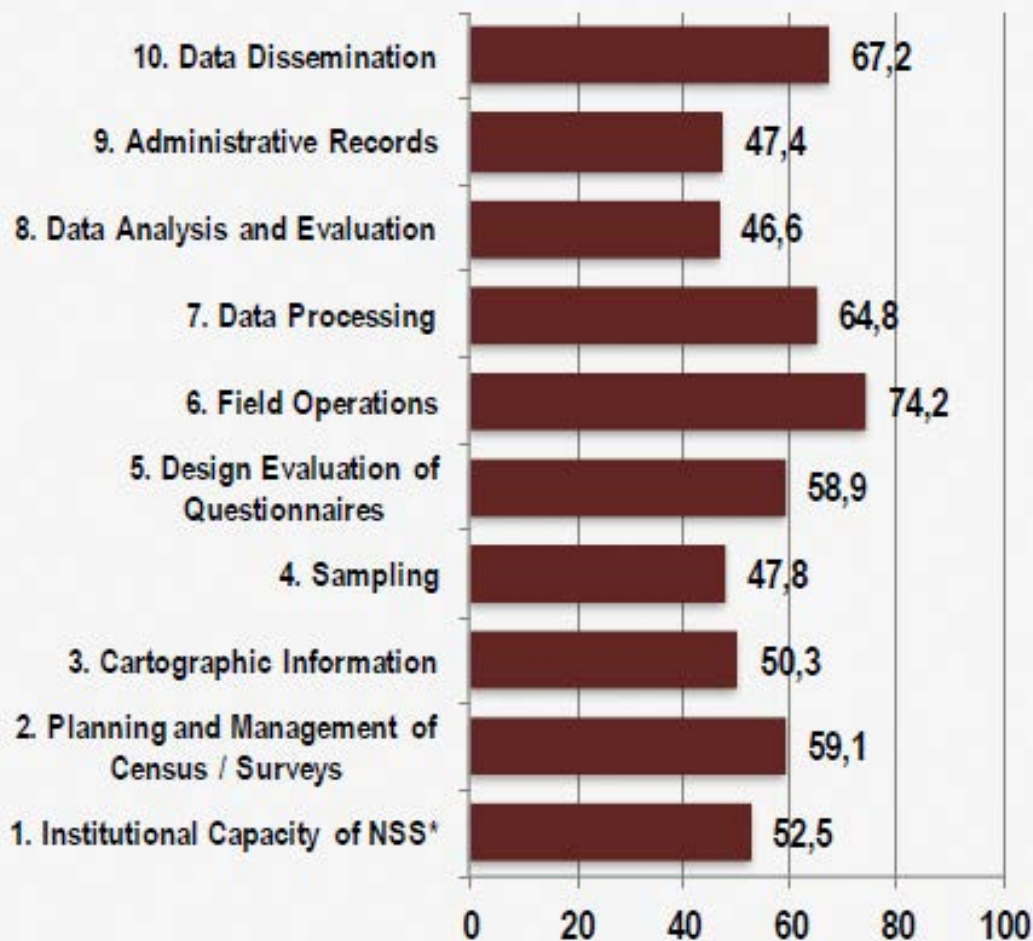
In 2016, IDB support provided to administer the Tool for Assessing Statistical Capacity (TASC):

- Developed by US Census Bureau
- Benchmark for comparing against other countries
- Identifies areas in need of improvement
- Basis for measuring progress over time

Brought together for the first time most of the statistics producing agencies in the public sector for a one-day working session to evaluate in detail the capacities, strengths and weaknesses of the entire NSS, with particular focus on the SIB as coordinator.

# TASC Assessment

### Individual Points



### Strengths:

- Survey operations
- Data processing
- Data dissemination

### Weaknesses:

- Cartography
- Documentation
- Use of administrative records
- Organization and capacity of the NSS



# IDB Support: 2016 to 2017

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TASC results provided a clearer way forward in the planning for the organization, building, and coordination of Belize's NSS

Following TASC, the SIB with support from the IDB embarked on a multi-year initiative to organize, strengthen, and operationalize the NSS as a cohesive system under the coordination of the SIB

**Consultations/Workshops:** Sensitization, establishment of comprehensive set of national indicators (SDGs, GSDS), assessment of training needs and establishment of training programs, and development of an NSDS



# Belize's NSDS: Draft 1

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Based on the TASC results and on stakeholder consultations, IDB provided technical assistance to draft the country's first NSDS

Presented to stakeholders in August 2017, during a working session where the document was reviewed, stakeholder feedback obtained.

Feedback is presently being incorporated into document and a draft 2, to include cost estimates for the implementation of the NSDS is expected shortly.

# Belize's NSDS: Draft 1

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- Outlines governance structure for the NSS: details the role of the SIB as NSS coordinator, provides for the establishment of an NSS advisory body, details role of NSS member agencies
- Identifies key strategic thematic areas to be focused on over the next three years, guided in particular by the demands being placed on the system (SDGs, GSDS)
- Provides a road map to achieving the goals corresponding to each

## The SIB's Board of Directors:

- Responsible for the operations of the SIB, including operations related to the coordination of the NSS.
- Ultimate oversight of the NSS and the implementation of the NSDS
- Acts as advisor to the government in all matters related to national statistics and reports to parliament annually on activities of the NSS

## NSS Advisory Committee:

- Appointed by the Board, with membership to include stakeholders outside of the Board's composition
- Supervise the implementation and operation of the NSS and NSDS
- Advise the Board in all matters relevant to the NSS

## The Statistical Institute of Belize:

- Establish and maintain a secretariat for the NSS, to operationalize and implement activities as per NSDS and the advice of the Advisory Committee, upon ratification by the Board
- Establish and promote national statistical standards and mechanisms for assessing NSS agencies' compliance with standards
- Provide NSS agencies with technical support in the implementation of standards

## NSS Agencies:

Comply with standards with respect to methodologies, concepts/definitions, and produce designated statistics as per an established schedule

## 1. Institutional strengthening of the SIB:

- Expansion of staff and physical space to house increased staff
- Establishment of NSS secretariat
- Upgrading of IT technology to meet the needs associated with the coordination of the NSS
- Upgrading/expansion of the existing statistical products

## 2. Capacity building within the Ministries, Departments and Agencies that are required to provide official statistical information:

- Recruiting of suitably qualified technical staff and training of existing staff as needed

## 3. Improvement to the statistical infrastructure:

- Evaluation and certification of statistical output as Official Statistics
- Establishment of statistical and methodological standards
- Upgrading of IT technology to be able to meet obligations of the NSS
- Establishment of data sharing protocols
- Adopt Code of Good Practice for entire NSS

## 4. Data development:

- Implement Statistical Indicators Program for the production of a set of national indicators to serve needs of policy makers, and meet reporting requirements of GSDS, SDGs and other international reporting requirements
- Assessment of administrative data to determine usefulness for statistical purposes
- Establishment of standards for the dissemination of data and build data dissemination capacity within NSS agencies
- Coordinate and collaborate with agencies responsible for M&E for GSDS and SDGs



## 5. Communication:

- Develop and implement a communications strategy for the entire NSS
- Develop and implement an NSS-wide national calendar of statistical releases

## 6. Funding and Technical Assistance:

- Secure adequate funding from government to ensure sustainability of statistical work program for the SIB and other NSS agencies
- Secure external funding for capacity building of the SIB and NSS as a whole

Implementation and operationalization of the first NSDS is scheduled to be done over a period of three years.

The second draft of the NSDS will:

- Incorporate stakeholder feedback
- Include cost implications for its implementation
- Set priorities among thematic goals
- Include a more fine-tuned timeline of activities, for the development of an action plan.

IDB has committed to continued technical assistance to the SIB and its NSS improvement initiative with funding already secured for:

- Commencement of in-service training program for SIB and NSS agencies in November 2017
- Development of an information system for NSS data and indicators (2018)
- Capacity building for all NSS in use of administrative registers (2018)
- Addressing major gaps in documentation (2018-2019)
- Development of NSS communications strategy (2018-2019)

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