



# **National coordination mechanisms for the production of official statistics in Belize**

**Diana Castillo-Trejo**

Statistical Institute of Belize

# Background

---

- Statistical Institute of Belize is legally designated as the main producer of official statistics, agency that certifies official status of national statistics, and coordinator of the National Statistical System (NSS)
- However, Belize's NSS has up to now been operating as a very loosely organized set of agencies, each producing its own sector specific statistics and with extreme disparities in levels of statistical capacity
- Various agencies within the NSS pushing forward with plans to create sector specific statistical systems

# Reporting Responsibilities

Major national and international reporting responsibilities are not centralized with the SIB, but rather lie with other designated agencies:

- Sustainable Development Unit is responsible for reporting on SDG progress and compiling required indicators
- Ministry of Economic Development, as coordinator of the government's Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy, is also responsible for its Monitoring and Evaluation component, with technical support from SIB
- Ministry Human Development has assumed responsibility for reporting related to the Montevideo Consensus

# Reporting Responsibilities

The SIB, as the major producer of official statistics holds responsibility for:

- Production of key economic indicators
- Production of population and demographic statistics
- Production of key social indicators, including Labour Force statistics, MICS indicators, and is presently piloting the production of an annual Multidimensional Poverty Index

# Coordinating Responsibilities

As coordinator of the NSS, the SIB is also responsible for:

- Certifying the official status of any and all indicators reported, nationally or internationally
- Ensuring that agencies responsible to produce various statistics and indicators have the required statistical capacity to comply
- Determining what gaps exist with respect to required indicators and take measures to close such gaps where possible

# Challenges

---

- Because the NSS was not previously organized to operate as a cohesive system, various agencies have already been moving forward with their own statistical activities, without interagency coordination
- Significant duplication of efforts and expending scarce resources in less than efficient manner
- An NSS that at this time is not adequately prepared to meet the demands of SDG reporting and GSDS Monitoring and Evaluation

# Challenges

---

- Lack of clarity about exact nature of the roles of the various coordinating agencies within the larger picture of the NSS
- Disparate levels of statistical capacity and access to resources, leading to disparities in the quality of indicators that are produced
- Limited human resources stretched thin within the system as a whole

# Opportunities

---

The heightened demands for timely, reliable, accurate official statistics in the context of limited resources and statistical capacity creates an opportunity to design a National Statistical System that will address these challenges by:

- Clarifying roles of agencies involved in the production and reporting of indicators
- Minimizing duplication of efforts
- Ensuring more efficient use of scarce resources
- Ensuring quality of statistical outputs
- Providing a means for sharing of data across the NSS



# The NSS and NSDS

The SIB's initiative for the strengthening of the country's NSS and the newly developed NSDS provide the starting point for such a coordinating mechanism.

## ***Vision Statement***

*The NSS is to be Belize's primary data center through a secure and modernized platform supported by and assessable to all relevant stakeholders.*

## ***Mission Statement***

*The NSS shall provide accurate, timely and relevant statistical information based on accepted international standards to all users, local, regional and international.*

# The NSS and NSDS

---

Within this context, the role of the SIB is not to produce all the required indicators to meet national and international commitments, or to carry out reporting for the SDGs or GSDS, but rather **to develop a well functioning and cohesive national statistical system that supports the reporting function of the SDU, the M&E function of the MED, and policy makers in general by producing the indicators they need**, in accordance with appropriate statistical standards, and in a timely and efficient manner.

The NSS provides the environment within which agencies no longer work in isolation, are able to collaborate and share information, are able to pool scarce resources and channel resources to where they are most needed.

The autonomous nature of the SIB along with the support being received from the IDB provides the momentum needed to drive forward the work of starting production and reporting of quality statistics and indicators in a timely manner, despite the tendency for government initiatives to move slowly.

Tangible positive results have been seen, even in these early stages of development and organization of the NSS:

- Agencies seeking or obtaining funding externally to develop their own statistical capacity are more frequently, often at the prompting of international donors, seeking to incorporate the SIB as technical experts:
  - Ministry of Agriculture – development and implementation of SPARS
  - Department of the Environment – development of data sharing protocols and standardization of data collection methodologies

- Finalization of set of national indicators done in close collaboration with the Ministry of Economic Development's GSDS team and fully incorporate the SDGs (workshop jointly funded and facilitated in April 2017)
- Has facilitated the start of interagency collaboration in areas of mutual benefit

# Other Opportunities for Collaboration

With support of Statistics Canada, SIB has embarked on an effort to establish bilateral cooperation with agencies in possession of administrative datasets

By means of Memoranda of Understanding, the SIB is formalizing mechanisms by which data sets will be obtained:

- Timeliness and frequency
- Format of data
- Means by which data will be transferred
- How data will be stored
- Confidentiality and security of data

Extending this model to assist other agencies to formalize data sharing arrangements

Keep in touch



<http://www.facebook.com/belizestatistics/>

Sign up to receive emails of our releases

<http://www.sib.org.bz/contact-us>

For more information, visit our website

<http://www.sib.org.bz>