

# **REFORM PROGRAMME IN THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF STATISTICS (NBS)**

## **Introduction**

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) came into being with the merger of the Federal Office of Statistics (FOS) and the National Data Bank (NDB). The creation is part of the implementation of the Statistical Master Plan (SMP), a programme document of the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN). The document's preparation was funded by the World Bank in 2003. The implementation is designed to span five years, 2005-2009.

Hitherto, the FOS, which had been the apex data producing agency of Government in Nigeria since 1947, had failed to meet its mandate of producing adequate, accurate and timely data needed for decision making. Falling into decay in much of the 1990s, the agency's performance got to its lowest ebb between 2000 and 2003. Among the reasons for this appalling state were the poor attention from Government, bad management, a bloated and low quality workforce, preponderance of non-professional staff (particularly administrative and accounting personnel), archaic data production and management technologies, and low morale and productivity of workers.

All these manifested in non-production of relevant statistics for planning and evidence-based policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, or, at best, the production of data that were untimely and often without any iota of integrity. This situation necessitated the current process of reforms in the NBS.

The broad objective of the reforms in the NBS is to implement the SMP and also transform the Bureau along the dictates of the ongoing Federal Government Public Service Reform Programme. The Agency is involved in the Economic Reform and Governance Programme (ERGP) of the World Bank and the European Union's (EU's) EMCAP programme, which are both managed through the Federal Ministry of Finance. The goal of the entire reform programme for NBS is to transform the Agency into a world class National Statistical Office (NSO), which will be able to produce adequate, high quality and timely data relevant to the demands of users in Government, the universities and research Institutes, private sector organizations and international agencies. The reform process is in four areas:

- **Infrastructure and Equipment.**
- **Human Resources Management and Development.**
- **Improved Data Production Methodology.**
- **Data Management, Dissemination and Access.**

## **1. Infrastructure and Equipment**

### **Purchase of NBS Corporate Headquarters Building**

The Federal Government purchased a new building for the NBS on Plot 672, Independence Avenue, Central Business District, Abuja in 2005, to serve as the Corporate Headquarters of the Agency. All the required headquarters staff in the four locations in Lagos will move into the new complex before the end of January 2006. This is the first time the nation's apex statistical agency will have a corporate headquarters since it was established in 1947. The Lagos Offices at Lancaster Street, Yaba; Broad Street, Lagos Island; Ribadu Road, Ikoyi; and Federal

Secretariat, Ikoyi; will be shut down. The Lagos State Office of the Bureau (currently located in Oko-Oba village) will be closed and the staff moved to the Ribadu Road Office which is a property of NBS. The Lancaster Street Office reverts to the owner from January 2006, while the Broad Street and Federal Secretariat Offices will be returned to the Federal Government.

- **Facilities:** The new corporate headquarters is currently being partitioned to accommodate between 400 and 500 professional and administrative staff. The building is a 5-Storey twin-edifice fitted with two 500KVA generators, a fire-fighting system, a-50,000-litre water storage system, and intercom facility. Renovation of the building and the facilities are on-going, because it had not been occupied since it was constructed in the early 1990s. With the assumption of duty by the new Director-General in June 2005, two floors of the building were partitioned into temporary offices to house the Abuja Office staff who were hitherto using an over-crowded rented office building in Area II, Garki. The NBS will hand over the Area II Office to the owner in December 2005. The new location has provided a more conducive atmosphere for the workers.
- **Partitioning:** The partitioning of the new headquarters is funded by the European Union (EU) under its EMCAP project. The EU and National Planning Commission processed the contract for the partitioning, which will also include furnishing of individual offices. The exercise will adopt the modern practice of openness in offices. While the offices of the top officers are enclosed in glasses the

subordinate staff will sit in open offices. The fifth floor will house the Offices of the DG, the National Data Centre (NDC), the Legal, Audit, Public Relations and Poverty Research and Analysis Units. The professional departments will occupy Floors 2-4, while the first floor will take a large Conference Room, Data Shop, Library, Canteen, Store and other Utility Rooms. The partitioning is expected to be completed before end of January 2006.

- **Equipping the Corporate Headquarters:** The offices are currently being equipped with modern ICT infrastructure. The EU has awarded a contract to an ICT company to install a Local Area Network (LAN) to link the 400-500 workers in the building. The cabling is on and will be finished before the end of December 2005. The EU has also awarded a contract for 522 units of high speed HP Desktop Computers, 15 units of Laptops, 3 HP Servers, 3 Xerox Machines, 2 large Scanners and 2 Network Printers. Every staff of the NBS will have a system on his or her table. The ICT infrastructure will also extend to the installation of VSAT to link the offices to the outside world. At present, the NBS enjoys a linkage through a temporary K-U2 band satellite dish to connect an 8-User LAN facility in the office. This was installed when the new DG resumed. Today, staff at the headquarters can browse the Internet and send and receive e-mails, situations which had not occurred in the agency before. The on-going infrastructural development in has greatly boosted the morale of the workers and they have started imbibing the spirit of change in their attitudes.

## 2. Human Resource Management and Development

- **Right-Sizing Workforce:** The NBS inherited about 4,100 workers from the FOS and NDB. A significant proportion of these workers are either unqualified to work in a National Statistics Office (NSO) or without the right qualifications. In fact, only 15 per cent of the workforces are professionals (Economists, Statisticians, Social Scientists or ICT experts) or sub-professionals (OND, HND). As part of the reform agenda for the NBS, 1,153 unqualified FOS staff (mainly enumerators, messengers, cleaners, artisans and others without the minimum qualification of OND) will be disengaged before the end of January 2006 under the auspices of the Bureau of Public Service Reform (BPSR). Their terminal entitlements have been calculated and vetted by the World Bank consultants. The Bank will provide the funds to pay the benefits which are close to N1 billion.
- **Pre-Disengagement Training:** The World Bank is funding a pre-disengagement training workshop for the 1,153 workers to be disengaged. The exercise will take place at the NBS Zonal Headquarters in Enugu, Calabar, Ibadan, Jos, Kaduna and Maiduguri. This is because over 85 per cent of those unqualified staff to be disengaged are in the State Offices. A training module has been finalised for the programme, which should end before the middle of January 2006. It is

envisaged that the terminal benefits of the re-trained out-going staff will be paid to them at the end of the training. The programme will focus mainly on exposing them to entrepreneurial skills to prepare them for the “Outside” world. It will rely on the skills acquisition programmes of the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) and National Directorate of Employment (NDE). In addition, arrangements are on by the Office of the Director-General of the NBS, to enable the disengaged workers have access to the micro-credit schemes of NAPEP, the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN), Commercial Banks, among others.

- **Pool Staff & Computerized Human Resource and Payroll System (CHRPS):** A large number of pool officers will not be required in the NBS, because staffing in the administrative and accounting units will be streamlined in accordance with the on-going Reform Agenda of Government and, particularly, the computerisation of personnel records and payroll system. On the resumption of the new DG, a Computerized Human Resource and Payroll System (CHRPS) was initiated, developed and used to prepare the salary of workers in Abuja in the month of November 2005. Abuja and Lagos staff, numbering over 1000, will be paid their December 2005 salaries through this system, and by March 2006, all workers of the Bureau will be managed by the CHRPS.

With the elimination of the manual, slow and error-prone personnel and payroll system, the NBS would no

longer need a large number of pool officers. The CHRPS, coupled with the disengagement of non-qualified staff, will right-size the workforce of the Bureau. With normal attrition due to age, length of service and other criteria, the Agency's staff strength shall be reduced to a manageable size and improved by the recruitment of highly-qualified and competent personnel.

- **Right Balance of Staff:** As part of the human management and development component of the NBS reform agenda, a right balance between the Headquarters, Zonal and State Offices shall be established. Hitherto, most professional staff had been in the Headquarters, but with the current decentralized structure of the NBS, a significant proportion of the professional staff (old and new) will be at the Zonal and State Offices to improve the integrity of data to be produced by the Agency. The right mix of professionals and non-professionals will increase the percentage of professionals and sub-professionals from the present 15 per cent to 85 per cent. The rationalisation exercise will also expunge fatigued and inefficient personnel from the workforce through the normal public service process.
- **Training Programme:** In November 2005, the EU designed and executed a training programme for all Headquarters staff in Lagos and Abuja. The purpose was to equip the staff for the new corporate

headquarters in Abuja. The training was for only professionals and sub-professionals, involving about 360 workers. The programme had three components: **Change Management, Statistics and ICT**. All professionals and sub-professionals, including Directors and Heads of Divisions and Units, attended the exercise. More advanced training programmes shall be organised in the new year. The trained staff shall be moved to Abuja Headquarters and the Zonal offices before the end of January 2006. The EU and the World Bank shall fund the movement.

### **3. Improved Data Production Technology**

- **Improved Data Collection:** Data collection and processing are two major components of statistics delivery system, and in Nigeria the technology for these activities have been largely manual. In a reformed NBS, the introduction of digital technology into data collection and processing has started in earnest. The traditional questionnaire design for manual data capture and verification process is now being replaced by e-forms, shading, bubbling and scanning. This will reduce the incidences of errors, and make the job more friendly, fast, less labour intensive and cheaper. In terms of labour use, the number of data processing staff for a national survey of 70,000 households and above will be halved by the new technology. Also, processing time will be reduced by over 80 per cent. For example, the on-going CWIQ survey of 74,400 household questionnaires will be processed in 10

weeks against the 6-7 months of the old manual processing methods for such large samples.

- **Out-Sourcing Data Collection:** Until now, most national surveys relied only on full-time enumerators of the Agency, with occasional recruitment of “relatives” and unqualified persons in the States. Under the reforms and with the expected disengagement of the non-qualified enumerators from the NBS, data collection will henceforth be out-sourced as is done in Kenya and other modern national statistics offices. In the on-going CWIQ survey, advertisements have been placed in two national newspapers, **Punch and Daily Independent**, to engage well-qualified enumerators who will be used to prosecute the project. This CWIQ survey represents the first time in the history of the National Statistical Office (and probably in Nigeria) that data collected from a national survey will not only be out-sourced, but also processed from e-forms by scanning technology. In the near future, data collection from the field shall be undertaken with mobile, hand-held GPS-GIS enabled equipment that will need neither manual questionnaires nor scanned e-forms. Data shall be collected and sent directly to a database at the headquarters. And, with the technology, the locations of all enumerators shall be geo-referenced and ascertained at the headquarters during surveys. All these will ensure data integrity in the NBS. For Agricultural Surveys, farm sizes shall be estimated

using the GPS technology rather than manual measurements.

#### 4. **Data Management Dissemination and Access**

- **Database Management Initiatives:** Data had always be organised in the traditional way in the Agency, using a flat filing system like creating tables from surveys and administrative records for official publications. The new initiatives under the reforms are to deploy several ICT-based systems in the NBS. The first of this will be the development of a **Time-Series Socio-Economics Database** of macro-level data in Nigeria. A compendium of the definitions of the variables on which data will be assembled is currently under preparation. Tentatively, over 54,000 variable names have been identified for the following 30 data groups, according to the International Standards of Industrial Classification (ISIC) and other UN classification systems:

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|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Agriculture                      | 16. Public Finance                   |
| 2. Water Resources                  | 17. Prices and Price Indices         |
| 3. Petroleum                        | 18. National Accounts                |
| 4. Mining & Quarrying               | 19. Public Order, Safety & Crime     |
| 5. Manufacturing                    | 20. Education                        |
| 6. Electricity Supply & Demand      | 21. Population & Vital Statistics    |
| 7. Water Supply                     | 22. Health and Human Services        |
| 8. Housing, Building & Construction | 23. Employment & Labour              |
| 9. Distributive Trade & Services    | 24. Environmental Statistics         |
| 10. International Trade & BOP       | 25. Membership Organisations         |
| 11. Hotels, Restaurants & Tourism   | 26. Recreation & Sporting Activities |
| 12. Transport                       | 27. Religion & Related Activities    |
| 13. Communications                  | 28. Public Administration & Security |
| 14. Money & Banking                 | 29. Meteorological Statistics        |
| 15. Financial Intermediation        | 30. Research and Development         |

## **Other Databases**

Other databases shall also be developed, notable amongst them will be a **micro-data database** that will be used to warehouse data from all surveys and censuses conducted by the NBS. That way, users (particularly researchers) will have access to household and farm level data for analyses. There will also be databases constructed for establishments and public sector organisations from the Federal to the Local Government levels. It is envisaged, as well, that a document management system will be installed to warehouse statistical and non-statistical information about Nigeria and her people from old publications.

- **National Data Centre (NDC) and NBS Portal:** The NBS is in the process of constructing a **National Data Centre (NDC)** and **NBS Portal** under a Public Private Partnership (PPP) arrangement. The PPP will be on the platform of the Nigerian e-Government Strategies (NeGst) protocol of the Federal Ministry of Science and Technology (FMS&T). The implementation plan is a tripartite arrangement between the NBS, NeGst and the NeGst Alliance Partners Consultative Forum (NAPCOF). The process is driven by the National Planning Commission (NPC), in collaboration with the FMS&T. NAPCOF is the umbrella organisation for all IT Solution Providers under the PPP arrangements which are to operate under the supervision and certification of NeGst. The solution providers are to supply the hardware, communications and software components of the IT infrastructure in the NBS. The

**NBS Portal** will serve as the virtual (electronic) window to the outside world and the NDC will be the national warehouse for all statistical and non-statistical information about Nigeria, going back to the colonial era. Apart from archiving of these historical materials, the NDC will also house all contemporary statistical information produced by the NBS through its routine and ad-hoc surveys and censuses as well as administrative records of all Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) at the Federal, State and Local Government levels. The contents of the NDC will reach all users through the **NBS Portal**. The facility will be commercialised to enable private sector participants recoup their investments under the PPP arrangement, and for the NBS to have a built-in financial capability to sustain its operations.

**NBS Central e-Mailing Facility:** The Agency is planning to reach regular data users in Government, academics, private sector and international organisations through the **NBS Portal**. This will be actualised through the establishment of a **Central e-Mailing Facility** to link regular (registered) users of data to the Bureau. These users, including Mr. President, will be in touch with the NBS anytime and anywhere in the world through the Bureau's website [www.nigerianstat.gov.ng](http://www.nigerianstat.gov.ng).

The configuration of some of the selected public service e-mail addresses are as follows:

Office of the President	<a href="mailto:president@nigerianstat.gov.ng">president@nigerianstat.gov.ng</a>
Office of the Vice-President	<a href="mailto:vp@nigerianstat.gov.ng">vp@nigerianstat.gov.ng</a>
Office of the Head of Service	<a href="mailto:hcsf@nigerianstat.gov.ng">hcsf@nigerianstat.gov.ng</a>
Office of the Secretary to the Govt.	<a href="mailto:sgf@nigerianstat.gov.ng">sgf@nigerianstat.gov.ng</a>
Office of the Economic Commission	<a href="mailto:ea@nigerianstat.gov.ng">ea@nigerianstat.gov.ng</a>
Central Bank of Nigeria	<a href="mailto:cbn@nigerianstat.gov.ng">cbn@nigerianstat.gov.ng</a>

Each user will have a registered pin number(pin) to link up with the NBS.

**Intranet Connection between NBS and Zonal Offices:** As part of the IT solution currently being introduced into the NBS, all the Zonal offices at Enugu, Calabar, Ibadan, Jos, Kaduna and Maiduguri are undergoing one form of upgrading or the other to serve as the hub of data capture and processing for the Bureau. Computers and communication equipment are currently being supplied to the Zonal Offices under a UNDP support programme. By the end of March 2006, the 6 Zonal Offices will have been connected electronically to the Headquarters in Abuja. Arrangements are on to provide a 40KVA generator to each of the Zonal Offices under the current support programme of the World Bank.

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16<sup>th</sup> December, 2005