



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

RESEARCH UNIT

PO Box 15 Cape Town 8000 Republic of South Africa
Tel: 27 (21) 403 8273 Fax: 27 (21) 403 8118
www.parliament.gov.za

STATISTICS SOUTH AFRICA STRATEGIC PLAN AND ANNUAL PERFORMANCE PLAN ANALYSIS

1. Introduction

Implementation of the National Development Plan (NDP) will require credible and reliable statistical systems that will assist in providing the crucial evidential base for critical political and administrative decisions. The aim of Stats SA is to provide relevant and accurate statistics by corresponding with internationally approved practice to inform users of the dynamics of the economy and society. It is mandated through the Statistics Act [No.6 of 1999] to coordinate statistical production among organs of the state, the private sector and any other institutions to facilitate proper planning, decision making and monitoring and evaluation of policies and projects.

In 2015/16, the transformative measures aimed at improving the quality of statistics will be evident. The 2015/16 work programme focusses on the envisaged changes to legislation, implementing and strengthening the Community Survey, bringing the production of GDP under one roof, and moving into a new building.

The Statistics Act ensures independence from political interference in the production and dissemination of official statistics. The Stats SA budget is divided into 7 programmes, which are Administration, Economic Statistics, Population and Social Statistics, Methodology and Standards, Statistical Support and Informatics, Corporate Relations, as well as Survey Operation.

Policy Priority of the Department

The National Development Plan (NDP) in place aims to contribute in the developmental and transformation process of South Africa by providing accurate data for policy implementation to overcome social challenges such as inequality, poverty and unemployment.¹ Therefore, Stats SA is required to work with all stakeholders in the country to provide accurate, quality statistical information on economic, demographic, social and environmental factors for proper NDP implementation. The institution has identified the following strategic priorities²:

- Expand the statistical information base by increasing its depth, breadth and geographic spread.
- Lead the development and coordination of statistical production within the South African National Statistics System (SANSS).
- Enhance public confidence and trust in statistics.
- Improve productivity and service delivery.
- Invest in the learning and growth of the organisation.
- Promote international cooperation and participation in statistics.

¹The Presidency (2011)

²Statistics South Africa (2015)



2. Expenditure Management

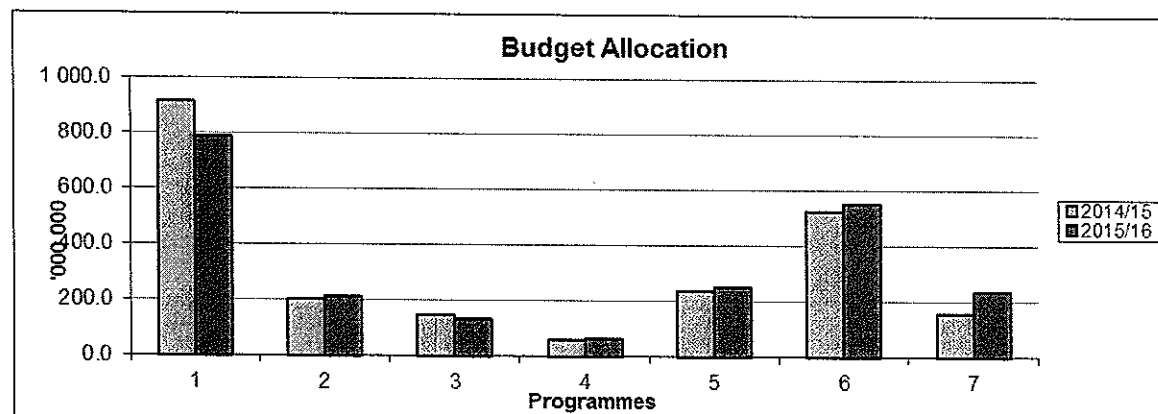
As at 28 February 2015, Stats SA was already overspending its 2014/15 budget, which is cause for concern in the context of the government's cost-containment policies. It is also concerning though that while there is overspending by some programmes, the Economic Statistics and the Methodology and Standards and Research programmes have been under-spending consistently. The Department should explain the persistent under-expenditure of these programmes to the Committee, especially the Economic Statistics programme as it is one of the two programmes (the other being Population and Social Statistics) through which Stats SA produces its main statistical products.

Stats SA

Table 1: Budget estimates and changes over the medium term

Programme	Budget				Nominal Rand change	Real Rand change	Nominal % change	Real % change
	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2014/15-2015/16	2014/15-2015/16	2014/15-2015/16	2014/15-2015/16
Programme 1: Administration	914.4	791.3	705.2	744.0	- 123.1	- 159.3	-13.46 per cent	-17.43 per cent
Programme 2: Economic Statistics	202.8	214.4	226.5	240.1	11.6	1.8	5.72 per cent	0.88 per cent
Programme 3: Population and Social Statistics	150.0	133.7	130.6	138.1	- 16.3	- 22.4	-10.87 per cent	-14.95 per cent
Programme 4: Methodology, Standards and Research	60.2	66.3	69.9	74.2	6.1	3.1	10.13 per cent	5.09 per cent
Programme 5: Statistical Support and Informatics	235.6	250.0	261.6	276.0	14.4	2.9	6.11 per cent	1.25 per cent
Programme 6: Statistical Collection and Outreach	524.7	553.6	571.3	605.6	28.9	3.5	5.51 per cent	0.68 per cent
Programme 7: Survey Operations	154.9	236.0	533.8	199.9	81.1	70.3	52.36 per cent	45.38 per cent
TOTAL	2 242.6	2 245.3	2 498.9	2 277.9	2.7	- 100.1	0.12 per cent	-4.47 per cent

Source: National Treasury and own calculation



Changes between 2014/15 and 2015/16



Stats SA has been allocated a budget of R2.25 billion for the 2015/16 financial year; a nominal increase of 0.12% from the previous financial year. The bulk of this budget is allocated to Administration, which amounts to R791.3 million or 35.2% of the total budget; Statistical Collection and outreach receives R553.6 million or 24.6% of the budget; and Survey and Operations receives R236.0 million or 10% of the budget.

Important developments in 2015/16 will include the advancement and strengthening of the National Statistics System, Stats SA taking over the publication of the expenditure side of the GDP from the South African Reserve Bank, as well as the second Community Survey, following the first survey that was conducted in 2007.

3. Strategic Outcomes

3.1 An Informed Nation

The purpose of this strategic outcome is to publish statistics that inform evidence-based decision-making by expanding the statistical information base, developing new and innovative statistical products and services, and revolutionising data systems.

What are the quarterly targets in terms of the following?

- **Economic Dynamics:** Reports on improving national accounts statistics, Economic Analysis, structural industry statistics in terms of manufacturing, as well as some of the government financial statistics. The lack of quarterly targets will make it difficult for the Committee to measure the commitment of timeliness in the publication of these important economic statistics.
- **Living Circumstances, Service Delivery and Poverty:** In terms of the social statistics programme (Population and Social Statistics), the annual target is for 23 reports³ to be released, but quarterly targets have only been provided for 2 reports that will be released in the first quarter.

3.2 Trusted Statistics

This outcome aims to ensure that statistics that are published are trustworthy by institutionalising quality management; innovating the statistics value chain for better efficiency; adopting international statistical standards and classifications; increasing stakeholder focus, communications and marketing; as well as designating statistics as official.

Most of the targets relating to innovating the statistics value chain for better efficiency have been decreasing progressively, which is a concern.⁴ These include:

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⁴ Page 128



- Since 2014/15, 90% instead of the previous 100% of methodological support to stakeholders was targeted.
- Reports regarding seasonal adjustment methodological notes have been reduced from 9 to 4.
- The number and timeliness of questionnaires checked for quality was 256 000 in 2014/15, but the target is 39 200 in 2015/16. Why does the institution set such low targets when it has been progressively recording over 200 000 checked questionnaires? The quarterly breakdown in terms of targets should also be provided.
- The number of death notification forms processed and edited for mortality and causes of death has decreased significantly from 560 000 in 2014/15 to 500 000 in 2015/16.
- The number of visitor sessions to the Website and number of publications downloaded to Website has also decreased significantly.

3.3 Partners in Statistics

Partners in statistics nationally, in Africa and the world. This is to be achieved through strengthening collaboration to build statistical sampling frames, leading the development and coordination of the National Statistical System, as well as strengthening international collaboration and partnerships.

- What has led to the number of technical reports regarding international collaboration and partnerships being reduced, e.g. less participation due to budget cuts?

3.4 A Capable Organisation

Stats SA strives for creation of a capable organisation that effectively drives legislative reform, enhances corporate governance and administration, strives to become an employer of choice, invests in ICT to align to organisational growth, as well as invests in a sustainable and responsive statistical infrastructure.

- The number of staff members trained in project management has decreased from 277 in 2011/12, 71 in 2012/13, 46 in 2013/14; and will now be constant at 20 for each year during the MTEF period. Stats SA must explain the reasons for decreasing the number of staff trained so drastically.⁵
- There's also been a significant decrease in terms of the number of projects in accordance with STATS SA's project management frameworks, which should also be explained to the Committee.
- There is a decrease in the number of reports on corporate governance to EXCO, the Risk Management Steering Committee and Audit Committee from 10/11 in previous financial years to 4 in all the years within the MTEF period.

⁵ Page 180



Committee. New outputs are also being developed in terms of talent management and employee wellness.