

Inviting comments/views on the draft National Policy on Official Statistics (NPOS)

The Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI) has formulated a Draft “*National Policy on Official Statistics (NPOS)*” which is being shared below.

2. This policy provides for setting out the practical regime *inter alia* of carrying out the nodal and coordination function by the Ministry and the matters connected therewith and incidental thereto, as envisaged in the Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961 and also to promote use of latest technologies and lay down a road-map towards modernized data collection and timely dissemination of information. The policy, further, reinforces the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.

3. The Ministry invites comments/views on the draft NPOS. Comments/views/suggestions on the draft policy may be sent through e-mail on capcso-mospi@gov.in and aisha.saeed@gov.in latest by September 09, 2023.

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NATIONAL POLICY ON OFFICIAL STATISTICS (NPOS)

1. Preamble

1.1. Official statistics serve as the essential foundation for evidence-based decision-making, policy formulation, and effective governance. It provides a comprehensive and objective understanding of society, economy, environment, and other key aspects of national life. It contributes to transparency, accountability, and the advancement of democratic principles by enabling informed public debate and monitoring the progress of nation towards its goals.

1.2. The transformative power of data and statistics in driving sustainable development, addressing societal challenges, and promoting inclusive growth is very well known in today's data driven world. Therefore, there is a need to make use of disaggregated data and the integration of diverse data sources to ensure that official statistics accurately reflect the realities and needs of all segments of population.

1.3. The National Policy on Official Statistics (NPOS) envisages to promote collaboration and coordination among relevant agencies inside or outside the Governments, including other constituent stakeholders of Indian official statistical system. It recognizes the importance of a decentralized statistical system that encourages data sharing, harmonization, and cooperation across various sectors and levels of government.

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1.4. The National Policy on Official Statistics (NPOS) provides for setting out the practical regime *inter alia* of carrying out the nodal and coordination function and the matters connected therewith and incidental thereto, as envisaged in the Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961 and also to promote use of latest technology including Artificial Intelligence (AI), lay down a road-map towards modernised data collection, Integrated Data System and timely dissemination of information for monitoring the Indian economy. The policy, further, reinforces the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.

2. Introduction

2.1. “Official Statistics” means statistics derived by the Government agencies from statistical surveys, administrative and registration records and other forms, which are published regularly, or planned to be published regularly, or could reasonably be published regularly. Governments or their agencies at all levels, including Municipal, State, and Central, generate and disseminate Official Statistics.

2.2. The primary objective of the Official Statistics is to provide an accurate, up-to-date, comprehensive and meaningful empirical picture to support the formulation and monitoring of economic and social policies by the Governments. Official Statistics also helps public in general and researchers, in particular, to assess the level of implementation of various schemes of the Government and to have an informed debate on various issues. As official statistics is produced within the Government, its

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credibility depends upon the professional competence, independence and integrity of the agencies responsible for producing such statistics.

2.3. The Official Statistics system in India is laterally decentralized amongst Ministries of the Government of India (GoI) at the central level, and vertically decentralized between the Centre and the States/Union Territories (UTs). At the national level, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) is the nodal agency for planning integrated development of the statistical system in the country.

2.4. The Official Statistical System in the States is similar to that at the Centre. It is generally decentralized laterally over the Departments of the State Government, with major departments, such as, agriculture or health, having large statistical divisions for the work of departmental statistics. At the apex level, the Directorates of Economics & Statistics (DES) is responsible for the coordination of statistical activities in the State/UT.

2.5. The Government appointed a National Statistical Commission (NSC) under the chairmanship of Dr. C. Rangarajan which submitted its report in 2001. In view of the recommendations of the Rangarajan Commission, the Government in June, 2005 decided to constitute National Statistical Commission. NSC was constituted in July, 2006 as an apex advisory body on statistical matters and has been functioning since then.

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2.6. Brief details on progress/achievements of the Indian Statistical System are at **Annex-I**. Some of the major initiatives which have been taken for improving the institutional framework for a robust official statistical system broadly include enacting Collection of Statistics (CoS) Act, 2008; adopting international standards of data collection and dissemination in the field of national accounts, price statistics, industrial statistics; designing National Indicator Framework (NIF) for monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); efforts towards increasing the effectiveness of Centre-State coordination on statistical matters, regular interaction with States and stakeholders on the matters of official statistics particularly State Domestic Products, Price statistics; implementing the Capacity Development Scheme including Support for Statistical Strengthening of States/UTs; increasing public awareness especially among the youth about the importance of statistics in decision making by organizing Statistics Day, etc. Recently, India has been elected, as a member, to the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) for the term 2024-2027 which is the highest decision-making body of United Nations in statistical matters. This bestows great responsibility on the shoulders of official statisticians of the country to not only maintain highest levels of efficiency, transparency and integrity of official statistical system of the country but also to collaborate with the statistical systems of other countries in order to play a greater role in the statistical field at the global level.

3. Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (FPOS)

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3.1. It is recognized that Official Statistics are public goods which must comply with certain basic principles, such as professional independence, impartiality, accountability and transparency about methods of collection, compilation and dissemination. These principles are enshrined in the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (UNFPOS). In India, the Union Cabinet on 4th May, 2016 adopted the UNFPOS and notified in the Official Gazette on 15th June, 2016. The status of alignment of Indian official statistics system with UNFPOS is at **Annex-II**.

3.2. The adherence to the UNFPOS for collection, compilation, and dissemination of the Statistics benefit statisticians, respondents (data providers), users and decision makers in different ways. For statisticians, the principles provide sound guidelines for professional practices based on scientific methodologies. For respondents, they guarantee that data are collected and used solely for statistical purposes and not for commercial or other use, and ensure data confidentiality. For users, they provide a transparent framework in respect of quality, relevance, utility and procedures of official statistics. For decision makers, they set out the role of official statistics, which provide impartial information needed in the decision-making process of a society and used by the government, businesses and the public.

4. Need for the NPOS

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4.1. The Indian Official Statistical System aims at appropriately responding to the growing expectations from data users and need to suitably adapt and strengthen their digital capabilities.

4.2. The proposed NPOS embraces big data analytics in a significant fashion so that the big pool of data available is captured and the socio-economic data transactions of the country find resonance in the official statistical system.

4.3. The Indian Official Statistical system is required to reorient their strategies with the emerging technologies including Artificial Intelligence (AI)/Machine Learning (ML) dovetailed with commensurate instruments of data collection, compilation processing, storage, integration, analysis and dissemination. AI/ML holds a great potential for statistical organizations. It can make the production of statistics more efficient by automating certain processes or assisting humans to carry out the processes.

4.4. The efforts of the Government have resulted in considerable improvement of the official statistical system of the country; its continuum and furtherance for addressing the contemporary digital driven statistical transformations in the ecosystem would help design the future of statistics in India.

4.5. Therefore, the existing institutional arrangements and processes need to be strengthened to meet the requirements of data in the fast-changing socio-economic

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landscape for monitoring the health of the economy on timely basis, and to suggest sector specific interventions for improvements.

4.6. In the above backdrop, the NPOS aims at providing for setting out the practical regime *inter alia* of carrying out the nodal and coordination function and the matters connected therewith and incidental thereto, as envisaged in the Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961 *among others* for the statistical systems in the Central and State/UT Governments.

5. Objective of the Policy

5.1. This policy will provide an overarching framework for providing reliable, timely and credible social and economic statistics, to assist decision-making within and outside the Government, stimulate research and promote informed debate relating to conditions affecting people's life ushering in a system of data-driven governance and decision-making.

5.2. Policy will act as a guiding principle for putting in place a holistic framework for improving and strengthening the Indian Official Statistical system.

5.3. Policy will promote establishing an institutional mechanism for effective statistical coordination among Central and State/UT Governments and bridge the data gaps by integrating the data existing in silos through user-friendly platforms by

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developing data-sharing protocols, optimising the use of administrative statistics and other alternate sources with extensive use of technology.

5.4. The policy will help accelerating creation of common standards for all official statistics produced using public funds thus enhancing privacy, safety, and trust.

6. Important targets and benefits of the policy

6.1 In furtherance of the objectives, the benefits of the policy will be as follows :

- i. Increased public confidence in official statistics;
- ii. Timely release of quality data through Advance Release Calendar;
- iii. Reduction in respondent burden through minimization of surveys and optimizing use of Administrative Statistics;
- iv. Responding to user needs and priority setting;
- v. Participatory and informed citizenry;
- vi. Strengthen institutional framework for coordination with policy planners and feedback of users;
- vii. System of continuous monitoring for improvement of data quality and its relevance.

7. Salient features of the policy

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7.1 Data integration; identification of core statistics which are of national importance and critical to the economy; statistical co-ordination with MoSPI through Statistical Advisers of Central Ministries/Departments and State/UT Government; continuous augmentation in quality through adoption of emerging technologies and best practices; enhanced scope and reach of capacity development exercises and strengthening the sub-national statistical systems are the major policy components.

8. Scope of the Policy

8.1. The NPOS will be applicable to all forms of official statistics including data and information created, generated, collected and archived using public funds provided for by the Indian Governments at all levels (Central/State/UTs/Municipal) directly, indirectly or through authorized agencies engaged by them including by the autonomous bodies unless any express provision regarding various elements of the NPOS is provided for in any other Acts/Rules/Regulations/Policies of the Governments issued from time to time.

9. Thrust areas of activities and initiatives of the Policy

9.1 Creation of Integrated Data System (IDS)

9.1.1 Creation of Integrated Data System (IDS) by MoSPI with following features:

- Integrated modern technology platforms to support use and reuse of data.

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- Digital survey platform for computer-assisted interviewing and online data interchange between various stakeholders of Official Statistical System.
- A data warehouse for data ingestion, storage, processing, analytics and archiving along with a metadata repository to support data integration and interoperability for ease of data management.
- A state-of-the-art output system for better access & dissemination.
- An innovation hub for piloting emerging technologies.

9.1.2 An Integrated Data System (IDS) led by MoSPI would seamlessly interlink data sets and enable interoperability among different data-producing systems at National and State/UT level, and their various disaggregation levels viz. All India, States/ UTs/ District/ Sub-District/ Block/ Village, Sector (Rural/ Urban), Gender, Social Groups, etc., for facilitating data exchange, collaboration, comparability, integration and data interoperability based on a framework of value and trust. IDS, built on an IT backbone, is necessary for statistical production in terms of efficiency, timeliness, responsiveness and greater value addition. IDS aims to convert hidden datasets into shared assets, limited data access into maximum use/reuse of data, fragmented use of resources into optimal usage and a data starving society to a data literate one.

9.1.3 An online web resource that provides simple and quick access to collections of data (Macro/Micro) would be created for ease of access of data from across the spectrum of Official Statistics system irrespective of the fact that underlying databases are distributed and managed by different stakeholders including Central

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and State/UT Government Ministries /Departments. The portal would have advanced functions for selecting and displaying data, performing customized queries, downloading data, and creating charts and maps, etc. as per the prevalent international best practices. It would offer tools that aid in data use, curation, storage, sharing, and re-use, with features such as:

- One-stop data shop – All datasets are searchable from one location.
- Easy data access – Access to all data types (e.g., geospatial, micro-data, time series, and others) would be possible. Raw or bulk data files may be available in multiple formats alongside application programming interfaces (APIs) and other tools to select and download data as per need.
- International Data Exchange Norms: The Portal would promote national & international data exchange protocol such as Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange (SDMX) and would use Data Documentation Initiative (DDI) as necessary across the systems.

9.1.4 Collection and processing of survey data through portable hand-held devices on Computer Assisted Personal Interviews (CAPI), as end to end solution, would further reduce the time lag in the publication of survey results. The interchange of secondary data among various stakeholders will also be made through web-based applications and ultimately through APIs to eliminate manual intervention.

9.1.5 The survey ecosystem would be evolved to supplement household survey data with GPS coordinates, para data, sensor data, time stamps, photographs and

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more, opens up new and greater possibilities of tackling innovative, policy-relevant questions.

9.1.6 Development of National Data Sheet in consultation and collaboration with line Ministries/Departments and States / UTs would enable devising uniform format for data providers who can put their data on the system in time for use. This will enable concerned Departments/ Organisation to fetch required data in time with minimal resources and at the same time provide relief to data providers from multiple visits of Central / State/ UT Officials in connection with same or similar data. This would be in line with the intent of the Government towards Ease of Doing Business (EoDB).

9.1.7 With the increased computing power, methodological advances and an unprecedented amount of data arising from the digitalization of society and business, Machine Learning including Artificial Intelligence has been making breakthroughs in the Official Statistical system. An innovation hub of MoSPI be established to use Data Science for public good with the help of new and emerging technologies like AI & ML in the phased manner following the National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence of NITI Aayog as also the Guidelines issued by the Government of India from time to time.

9.2 Optimizing the Use of Administrative Statistics

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9.2.1 Administrative data sources are data sets that contain information collected primarily for administrative purposes. This includes, but is not limited to, data collected by government departments, public bodies, and other organizations for the purposes of registration, transaction, and record-keeping, usually during the delivery of a service. They include administrative registers (with a unique identifier) such as a country's population, business, address, education, health, employment, and tax registers, as well as other administrative sources (without a unique identifier). Administrative registers and/or other administrative sources are used to create statistical registers, which are specifically used for statistical purposes, including a census.

9.2.2 Administrative data are becoming increasingly important in today's governance framework. They are typically the spinoff of some operational exercise and are often viewed as having significant advantages over alternative sources of data. Although there is no denial to the fact that such data have merits, users should approach the analysis and place reliance on such data with great vigilance. Besides, they should be handled with the same level of prudence and criticism as they approach the analysis of data based on their collection from other sources.

9.2.3 There are three broad categories of purposes for which administrative data are collected. These are: (a) monitoring of government programmes and other forms of government intervention; (b) enabling regulatory activities and audit actions; and (c) targeting outcomes of government interventions. In the Indian context, a very

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large volume of data is generated by administrative ministries/departments and State/UT governments for each of these purposes.

9.2.4 Optimizing the use of Administrative Statistics will benefit in many ways including the following:

- **Reduced Cost to the Government:** The running costs of using administrative sources to produce statistical outputs are usually significantly lower to the running costs for a statistical survey.
- **Reduction in Respondent Burden:** Use of administrative statistics will reduce the survey activity which in turn will reduce the response burden on data suppliers.
- **Wide Coverage:** Administrative sources often give complete, or almost complete, coverage of their target population which in turn will help to eliminate survey errors and non-response.
- **Timeliness:** The use of administrative sources may increase the timeliness of statistical outputs because statistical surveys generally take time to plan, to design and pilot forms, to analyze the population and optimize the sample etc.

9.2.5 The central Ministries/Departments and States/UTs would explore ways for facilitating the optimum use of administrative data and their appropriate dissemination in compliance with a predefined metadata structure.

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9.2.6 The Central Ministries/Departments and States/UTs will make efforts to maintain their metadata over a long period of time. They may also put in place Online Analytical Processing (OLAP) for their retrievability.

9.2.7 The NPOS envisages to encourage the Central Ministries/Departments and State/UTs to put in place an institutional mechanism to coordinate with MoSPI through Statistical Advisers on all statistical matters in terms of the Guidelines to be issued by it having to do with comprehensively review the existing administrative data system for bringing about uniformity, consistency and avoiding duplication, to identify data gaps and to put in place a mechanism for timely generation of quality administrative statistics, data sharing in usable databases and optimizing their utility. The roles and responsibilities of the Statistical Advisers for central Ministries/Departments have been indicated in a charter at **Annex III**. States/UTs will be persuaded to design a similar charter for their Statistical Advisers as per their needs.

9.2.8 The NPOS aims at promoting the use of existing Administrative Statistics e.g. GST data, Income Tax data, E-way bill, M/o Corporate Affairs (MCA) data, Export-Import data of Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence & Statistics (DGCIS), Passenger Traffic and Freight Data of M/o Railways/ M/o Road Transport & Highways/ M/o Civil Aviation, Agricultural Statistics through digitized & updated land records of States/UTs, etc. for compilation of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), State Domestic Product (SDP) and other statistical products/economic indicators as per the requirement/needs of the Ministry/Department.

9.2.9 MoSPI envisages preparing a compendium of Administrative Statistics generated by Central and State/UT Governments, and update them at regular interval of time. The compendium will contain Meta-data information (scope, coverage, concepts definitions, etc.) and will be available at the portal developed by the MoSPI.

9.3 Focusing attention and resources on core official statistics

9.3.1 The Government being the sole producer of official statistics and also its prime user, has a responsibility to ensure the availability of such statistics in a qualitative and time bound manner from the perspective of users, both public and private. Official statistics being a very large domain, it is necessary to have focused attention on key statistical products such as Gross Domestic Product, Price Indices, IIP, Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), etc., to be designated as core statistics, which are critical to the economy and are required to be robust, reliable, good quality and timely.

9.3.2 To ensure the availability of timely and reliable core statistics, there is need of seamless flow of information amongst various Central Government Ministries/ Departments, State/UT Governments while preserving confidentiality. MoSPI had taken an initiative in this direction by prescribing core statistical functions for some of the Central Ministries/ Departments in 2015, stipulating concerned Ministries/Departments to *inter alia* maintain relevant databases and also undertake

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monitoring/ evaluation of the concerned projects and programmes. The list of core statistics needs to be reviewed and revised periodically as per emerging data requirements.

9.3.3 The core statistics will have the following main characteristics:

- (a) To be of national importance.
- (b) Mandatory for the Government at all levels to collect and disseminate as per laid down protocols.
- (c) Conforming to prescribed definitions, concepts and standards.
- (d) To be updated periodically with pre-determined periodicity.
- (e) To be made available at various disaggregated levels.

9.3.4 In consultation with the National Statistical Commission (NSC) and Central Ministries/ Departments, a list of core statistics had been prepared in respect of eight domains, namely, National Income, Production & Services sectors, Budgetary Transactions, Money and Banking, Capital Market, Indices and other short-term indicators, External Sector, and Demography, Social and Environment Sectors. The list of core statistics with more granularities will be reviewed and finalized in consultation with concerned Central Ministries/ Departments/States/UTs for making them more effective.

9.3.5 The policy initiatives on core statistics focus on the following attributes:

- (a) Production of core statistics as per a pre-announced Advance Release Calendar.

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- (b) Putting in place appropriate institutional arrangements for production, sharing and dissemination of core statistics and regular statistical audit thereof.

9.4 Innovation on Surveys

9.4.1 Users of Indian Official Statistics system are constantly raising new types of data demand in addition to making them available in a short span of time. This creates pressures to reduce costs and burdens on respondents to statistical surveys. As the volume, content and coverage of administrative sources grows, so does their attractiveness as an alternative to statistical surveys. Administrative and survey data need to be integrated for each individual unit in order to produce the data set used for statistical outputs.

9.4.2 The NPOS seeks to reorient the planning and development of various Surveys in such a way that identifies gaps in data availability, avoid duplication, and disseminating their results maintaining decided timeliness. The NPOS encourages the producers to design the short-term surveys to address the data demands concerning generation of important indicators for providing data within short time-intervals on a regular basis.

9.5 Continuous Augmentation of Quality of Official Statistics

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9.5.1 Quality of official statistics is maintained by different Government Departments through practices like as adherence to international standards & protocols, regular review & modification of methodologies in line with new requirements & emerging technologies, on-the-spot field inspections during data collection of surveys / censuses, scrutiny & validation of data, etc. Statistical products, and in particular those that are regularly or periodically produced by any office need to be governed by international frameworks of quality. Further, to garner public trust in quality of official statistics they also need to be open to quality reviews, for this it may be necessary that the methods followed from start to finish i.e. right from the point of collection of data to its processing and dissemination of results are well documented and available to the public.

9.5.2 In terms of quality checks and other related matters as provided for in the Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961, the NPOS aims to encourage the Ministry/Department and their agencies engaged in production of statistics to take up periodic reviews with the objective of continually augmenting the quality of statistics being produced by them. The NPOS also aims to encourage documentation of various steps involved in compilation of official statistics by the Central Ministries/Departments and State Governments /UT Administrations.

9.5.3 The NPOS aims to encourage the Central Ministries/Departments/State/UTs to align their data products with the Data Governance Quality Index (DGQI) of the NITI Aayog for strengthening their data preparedness. The NPOS also promotes

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application of advanced technological tools using socio economic data, night light data, etc. for the Ministry/Departments to improve upon their data preparedness.

9.6 Enhancing Statistical Coordination to implement policy directives

9.6.1 The NPOS envisages the Central Ministries/Departments and State/UTs to put in place an institutional mechanism to coordinate with MoSPI through Statistical Advisers, on all statistical matters in terms of the Guidelines to be issued by it from time to time.

9.6.2 The coordination function include however, would not be limited to the following:

- Coordinate with MoSPI in the implementation of Guidelines on core statistics, administrative statistics and other matters as evolved from time to time.
- Provide information/ data/ statistics for statistical purposes of MoSPI.
- Advise and monitor the sharing of information among Centre and States/UTs and avoid duplication.

The detailed role and responsibility of Statistical Advisers are placed at **Annex –III**.

9.6.3 For the purpose of statistical coordination with States/ UTs, MoSPI will put in place a suitable mechanism so as to facilitate exercising its mandate to perform the

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nodal functions as provided for in Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961.

9.7 Capacity Development of Statistical Officials

9.7.1 The Government has taken initiatives for Capacity Development of statistical personnel through funding various schemes which include training, infrastructure augmentation, public awareness exercise, exposure of statistical professionals to international practices etc. in the field of official statistics.

9.7.2 In continuation with the initiatives of the Government for Capacity Development in general and the intent of the Government for utilizing the officers of Indian Statistical Service (ISS)/Subordinate Statistical Service (SSS) in designing the data related systems, in general, the capacity development will be undertaken in a large scale and at a faster pace with world class technological interventions.

9.7.3 The specific activities targeted for capacity development are envisaged as below:

- Study of skill needs assessment of statistical professionals not only in the field of statistics but also in the relevant contemporary interdisciplinary fields.
- Creation of infrastructure & manpower for setting up of zonal/ regional training centers in the official statistics.

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- Collaboration with international agencies for training in global best practices and prepare professionals with analytical skills using Big Data, Artificial Intelligence and other emerging technologies.
- Developing the National Statistical Systems Training Academy (NSSTA), the Training Institute of MoSPI, as a Centre for Excellence for training in official statistics not only for the statistical personnel of India but for the countries approaching it.
- Developing capabilities of officers in order to align with emerging IT technologies that are best suited to the statistical system of the country.
- Introducing administrative statistics as a topic in the training curriculum of various training institutes/ academies imparting training to other civil and central services.
- Introducing mandatory orientation training for ISS (especially at STS level and above) and SSS officers for sector specific appreciation of data systems, their challenges and the ways to address them will be imparted by the NSSTA before postings.

9.8 Strengthening the Official Statistical System in the States/UTs

9.8.1 The success of the Indian Official Statistical System is critically dependent on the initiatives of States/ UTs for improving their own statistical systems in line with the broad national objectives of monitoring the economy. To this end, the statistical administrative machinery of States/UTs needs to be geared up for better

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coordination and aggressive action plan for improvement of their statistical products, processes and system of statistical administration.

9.8.2 MoSPI will initiate consultation with States/UTs to come out with an index to gauge the Statistical Capacity of the States / UTs from time to time. The index will serve as an instrument vide which the States / UTs may identify the areas in which they need strengthening at State / UT or sub State level, which may help them to identify gaps and bridge them.

9.8.3 The index may also help in monitoring the progress of States / UTs vis-a-vis a baseline performance. The process of reforms would also include plan for district and sub-district level strengthening. Each state/UT will be encouraged to put in place such an institutional mechanism for preparing and implementing the process of reforms.

10 Implementation and Review of the Policy

10.1 The necessary detailing and formulation of plan of actions in respect of each of the components of the policy with timelines/milestones and fund requirements will be done by concerned authorities in Central and State/UT Governments, wherever necessary. However, a broad implementation framework as envisaged is given below:

Short-Term (1-2 years)	Medium Term (2-5 years)	Long Term (> 5 years)
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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preparation of detailed implementation guidelines for NPOS.• Designation of Statistical Advisers• Finalization of Core Statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Integrated Data System• Development of National Data Sheet• Preparation of Compendium of Administrative Statistics with meta-data• Bridging of data gaps through optimizing the use of administrative statistics• Capacity Development• Advance Release Calendar• Innovation on surveys.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strengthening the national statistical system through effective coordination with Central Ministries/Departments and States/UTs, leveraging use of technology, creating common national standards, etc.• Indian statistical system to play greater role through sharing of successful innovative practices and setting standards in the global statistical community.• Developing the National Statistical Systems Training Academy (NSSTA) as a Centre for Excellence• Creation of infrastructure
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		& manpower for setting up of zonal/ regional training centers in the official statistics
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10.2 The existing institutional framework will be strengthened by augmenting the resources in terms of human capital, IT and other physical infrastructure, and creating a suitable dedicated coordination and monitoring infrastructure with approval of competent authority for implementing the policy.

10.3 The NPOS will be implemented across Central Line Ministries and State/UT Governments in a concerted way, through a Division set up in the MoSPI with dedicated team of officers by re-deploying the existing resources. It will give a thrust to implement the provisions of the policy in a mission mode. The policy will be operationalized by way of detailed guidelines and plans of action to be brought out by the Division in consultation with the central Ministries/Departments and State/UT Government.

10.4 Further, every central Ministry/Department and State/UT Government will work closely with MoSPI through Statistical Advisers for ensuring the implementation of the policy.

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10.5 The implementation of the policy will be reviewed by the MoSPI as and when required. On the basis of these reviews, necessary remedial measures will be taken up to improve the Indian official statistical system on a sustained basis.

10.6 Any future changes and revisions in this policy, as deemed necessary, will be made by MoSPI.

Existing features of the Indian Statistical System

The statistical system is laterally decentralised among the Ministries of the Government of India (GOI), and in every one of them, vertically decentralised, between the Centre and the States. The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) is the nodal agency for planning integrated development of the statistical system in the country and for bringing about coordination in statistical activities among statistical agencies in the Government of India and States/ UTs. The National Statistical Commission (NSC) is the apex advisory body on statistical matters.

2. The subject 'Statistics' is covered in both the Union and Concurrent list in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India [Entry 94 of the Union List (List – I) and Entry 45 of Concurrent List (List – III)]. The collection of statistics for different subject-specific areas, like agriculture, labour, commerce, industry, etc., vests with the corresponding administrative ministries. Statistics is mostly collected as a by-product of administration, either at the time of registration/ licensing of units under various laws or in exercise of power to obtain information under various statutes/ rules/ regulations. However, there are also exclusive statistical laws such as the Census Act, 1948 ; the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969; the Collection of Statistics Act, 2008.

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3. Continuous efforts have been made by various statistical agencies in India to improve their systems. For instance, the Office of Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India (O/o RG & CCI) under the Ministry of Home Affairs have been making efforts for improvement in the Civil Registration System (CRS) under the aegis of Registration of Birth & Death Act, 1969. In order to supplement the census data and to fill the data gaps of existing CRS, regular Sample Surveys are also being conducted by the O/o RG & CCI. Ministries like Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Ministry of Labour & Employment, Ministry of MSME, Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, etc. have been undertaking initiatives towards improvements in official statistics within their domain. Some of the major initiatives/achievements of the Indian Statistical System are as follows:

- i. **Adoption of United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (UNFPOS):** The Government adopted and notified UNFPOS in 2016, to promote good practices and professional ethics in production and dissemination of Official Statistics in the country.
- ii. **Improvements in survey ecosystem:** The sample surveys conducted by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) of India are the most widely used sources of important socio-economic indicators in India. The surveys conducted are based on scientific sampling methods. Data is collected through dedicated field staff who are regularly trained in the concepts and definitions of the items and the scope of the survey.

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In sync with Digital India initiative, the surveys have been transformed from Paper Assisted Personal Interviewing (PAPI) mode to Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) mode and web portal for faster processing facilities in surveys.

- iii. **National Statistical Systems Training Academy (NSSTA):** India has a dedicated National Statistical Systems Training Academy (NSSTA), which is committed to augment capacity building in the field of Official Statistics. The Academy is actively engaged in building capacities in the area of Official Statistics and related disciplines at the National/Sub-National as also at the international level, particularly amongst developing countries.
- iv. **Advance Release Calendar:** MoSPI has advance release calendars for National Accounts Estimates (annual as well quarterly). Besides, MoSPI has already been maintaining a predetermined calendar for releasing Consumer Price Index and its corresponding Inflation figure through a Press Release Note and all the stakeholders are well familiar with its timeliness for the publication of CPI data. Index of Industrial Production (IIP) is also released every month as per advance release calendar. MoSPI also has predetermined Annual Release Calendar for bringing out the Publications/reports on social statistics.

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- v. **Emphasis on the quality of statistics:** In the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI), the methodological issues concerning the compilation of national accounts are overseen by an Advisory Committee on National Accounts, industrial statistics by a Standing Committee on Industrial Statistics and price and cost of living indices by a Technical Advisory Committee on Price Indices.

The major macro-economic aggregates namely Gross Domestic Product estimates, Consumer Price Index, and Index of Industrial Production adhere to the standards prescribed by the Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

- vi. **National Metadata Structure for Statistical Products:** MoSPI has circulated a standard metadata structure to all Central Ministries and State Governments for all Ministries compliance.
- vii. **Quality control measures:** The Ministry has constant focus on the quality of its statistical products. Quality is ensured through practices like adherence to international standards & protocols, regular review & modification of methodologies in line with new requirements & emerging technologies, on-the-spot field inspections during data collection of surveys, scrutiny & validation of data, etc.

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- viii. **Implementation of Capacity Development (CD) Scheme:** The overall objective of the CD Scheme, a central sector scheme being implemented by MoSPI, is to augment infrastructural, technical as well as manpower resources for making available credible and timely official statistics for policy-makers and public at large.
- ix. **Support for Statistical Strengthening (SSS) sub-Scheme:** Under Support for Statistical Strengthening (SSS), an ongoing Central Sector (CS) Sub-Scheme of MoSPI, Grant in Aid is provided to the States / UTs for collecting, compiling and disseminating reliable official statistics for policy planning at the State and Sub-State levels.
- x. **Guidelines on Statistical data Dissemination:** MoSPI has also notified the Guidelines on Statistical Data Dissemination on April 1, 2019 within the overall framework laid down in National Data Sharing and Accessibility Policy (NDSAP), 2012 of Department of Science & Technology.
- xi. Conversion of MoSPI surveys unit level data in international standard format i.e. in IHSN (International Household Survey Network) for dissemination to the researchers in India and abroad. Online downloading of Meta data and reports of MoSPI surveys through National Data Archive portal.
- xii. **User friendly online application for dissemination of metadata & microdata of Surveys:** Free and open access to all Survey data of MoSPI

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through the National Data Archive portal after registration through secured Login and password.

Recently, India's expertise in the field of statistics, diversity and demography has earned it a seat for the term 2024-2027 on the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC), the highest decision-making body for international statistical activities, responsible for setting of statistical standards and the development of concepts and methods, including their implementation at the national and international level. India has been elected as a member to UNSC after almost 2 decades, a feat for the Indian statistical system.

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Annex-II

UNFPOS and Indian Statistical System

Principles	Status in India
<p>Principle 1. Official statistics provide an indispensable element in the information system of a democratic society, serving the Government, the economy and the public with data about the economic, demographic, social and environmental situation. To this end, official statistics that meet the test of practical utility are to be compiled and made available on an impartial basis by official statistical agencies to honor citizens' entitlement to public information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Committees, Technical Working Groups etc comprising domain experts are constituted from time to time for recommending appropriate statistical methodologies and approach and adapting international standards for statistical processes and products. For the surveys conducted by National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), every change in the concept and definition or in the questionnaire structure is presented before the dedicated expert group and the stakeholder ministries adopting the relevant prevalent international concepts and methodologies to the extent applicable in Indian context and incorporated only after getting necessary approvals.• MoSPI also has advance release calendars for National Accounts Estimates (annual as

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well quarterly). Besides, MoSPI has already been maintaining a predetermined calendar for releasing Consumer Price Index and its corresponding Inflation figure through a Press Release Note and all the stakeholders are well familiar with its timeliness for the publication of CPI data. Index of Industrial Production (IIP) is also released every month as per advance release calendar.

- Statistical products/reports are released in public domain. For instance, the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI) has been disseminating micro data from its surveys since long. The internationally accepted web-based survey cataloguing system powered by the National Data Archive (NADA) software developed by the International Household Survey Network (IHSN) is being used by MoSPI for the same. This system serves as a portal for policy makers and researchers to browse, search, and download relevant data on survey documents and associated metadata.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• MoSPI has also notified the Guidelines on Statistical Data Dissemination on April 1, 2019 within the overall framework laid down in National Data Sharing and Accessibility Policy (NDSAP), 2012.• The Unit level sharable data is made available to users free of cost.• As recent initiatives, in this regard, MoSPI has developed a National Metadata Structure (NMDS) for statistical products which lays down standard for disseminating the data.
<p>Principle 2. To retain trust in official statistics, the statistical agencies need to decide according to strictly professional considerations, including scientific principles and professional ethics, on the methods and procedures for the collection, processing, storage and presentation of statistical data.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Surveys conducted by NSSO are based on scientific sampling methods, standard statistical techniques, extensive scrutiny and supervision.• The statistical products brought out by MoSPI are brought out in line with relevant international standards.

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<p>Principle 3. To facilitate a correct interpretation of the data, the statistical agencies are to present information according to scientific standards on the sources, methods and procedures of the statistics.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All relevant documents including data sources, concepts, definitions, methodology, explanatory notes are made available in public domain.
<p>Principle 4. The statistical agencies are entitled to comment on erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• International concepts, definitions and standards are followed in generating statistical products.• Comprehensive metadata and explanatory notes to data releases are made available to prevent misuse and misinterpretation.• Press statements/clarifications on data related issues are made as required.
<p>Principle 5. Data for statistical purposes may be drawn from all types of sources, be they statistical surveys or administrative records. Statistical agencies are to choose the source with regard to quality, timeliness, costs and the burden</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All relevant documents including data sources, concepts, definitions, methodology, explanatory notes are made available in public domain. MoSPI has developed a National Metadata Structure (NMDS) for statistical products which lays down standard for disseminating the data.• NPOS also proposes for optimum use of

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on Respondents.	administrative data as well.
Principle 6. Individual data collected by statistical agencies for statistical compilation, whether they refer to natural or legal persons, are to be strictly confidential and used exclusively for statistical purposes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identification particulars of persons/ entities are anonymised while disseminating unit level data of the national sample surveys.• Information collected from individuals is kept confidential and is used only for statistical purposes.• Collection of Statistics (CoS) Act, 2008, being administered by MoSPI, also provides for protecting confidentiality of information of respondent.
Principle 7. The laws, regulations and measures under which the statistical systems operate are to be made public.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In India, collection of official statistics is governed by appropriate legislations like Collection of Statistics Act, 2008; Census Act, 1948; Registration of Birth and Death Act, 1969; Industries Development and Regulation Act, 1951 and various Labour Acts and other administrative Acts/ Rules/ Regulations.

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<p>Principle 8. Coordination among statistical agencies within countries is essential to achieve consistency and efficiency in the statistical system.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• MoSPI is the nodal agency for planning integrated development of Indian Statistical System. MoSPI coordinates statistical activities amongst Central Ministries/Departments and States/UTs Government.
<p>Principle 9. The use by statistical agencies in each country of international concepts, classifications and methods promotes the consistency and efficiency of statistical systems at all official levels.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• International concepts, definitions and standards are followed in generating statistical products.
<p>Principle 10. Bilateral and multilateral cooperation in statistics contributes to the improvement of systems of official statistics in all countries.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• India actively associates and participates in all the major discussion forums on statistical matters organized by various international organizations such as the UNSC, ILO, FAO, IMF, WHO, UNESCAP, World Bank, ADB, etc.• There has been regular engagement with various international institutions of excellence for developing statistical proficiency.

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Annex-III

Statistical Advisers: Indicative Roles and Responsibilities in Central Ministries/Departments

Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI) is the nodal agency for planning integrated development of the statistical system in the country and is inter alia responsible for the following:

- i. Coordination of statistical work with a view to identifying gaps in data availability or duplication of statistical work in respect of Departments of the Government of India and State Statistical Bureaux (SSBs) and to suggest necessary remedial measures;
 - ii. Laying down and maintenance of norms and standards in the field of statistics, evolving concepts, definitions and methodology of data collection, processing of data and dissemination of results; and
 - iii. Advising the Departments of the Government of India on statistical methodology and on statistical analysis of data.
2. The NPOS aims to strengthen the institutional mechanism of statistical coordination between MoSPI and Central Line Ministries through a system of Statistical Advisers for statistics in order to meet the policy objectives in a mission mode.
3. In view of the above, roles and responsibilities of Statistical Advisers in Central Line Ministries are being codified for compliance as detailed in subsequent paragraphs.

4. Positioning of Statistical Advisers

4.1 Each Central Ministry/ Department shall designate a Nodal Officer preferably not below the rank of Joint Secretary as Statistical Adviser for all statistical matters of the Ministry.

4.2 The concerned central Ministry/Department will provide all necessary facilities including adequate qualified human resources and infrastructure to the Statistical Adviser so designated for discharging the roles and responsibilities as envisaged and indicated below.

Role & Responsibilities of Statistical Advisers towards Statistical Products, Processes, Standards, Meta-data, Data Dissemination, Use of Technologies and Statistical Audit, etc.

5. Statistical Products

5.1 The Statistical Advisers will develop an agreed set of coherent, reliable, consistent and quality statistics to meet the needs of the Government and key stakeholders. This will necessarily include all statistics as relevant to the Programmes, Schemes, Policies and other administrative Statistics of the Ministry.

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5.2 The Statistical Advisers will also be associated with the Management Information System of the Programmes/Schemes of the Ministry for providing insights for scheme improvement. The Programme Divisions of the Ministries will send the Reports of Evaluation Studies for their comments from statistical angle before acceptance.

5.3 Relevant Data with Metadata should be provided to MoSPI through APIs/Web Form for extraction of validated/high frequency data currently available in different formats (MS Excel/MS Word/PDF).

5.4 They will study the Administrative Statistics generated by their Ministry and will ensure its optimum utilization before undertaking any surveys in consultation with MoSPI. They will also share the Administrative Statistics with meta-data with MoSPI for preparation of a compendium of these statistics for further use.

5.5 They will help implement the best and emerging quality practices in respect of core statistical products of their Ministries in order to ensure the trustworthiness, quality and value of the data.

6. Statistical Processes

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6.1 The Statistical Advisers will render advice to their Ministry on recent developments, international best practices and visualize future data requirements in their organization on all aspects of the statistical process including:

- (a) survey and sample design
- (b) estimation for missing values
- (c) data cleansing/editing and integration activities.
- (d) harmonization of disparate data sets including concepts in administrative statistics and coverage issues.
- (e) effective dissemination to stakeholders

6.2 They will periodically review the administrative data systems through rationalisation of forms, returns, reports and processes, whether statutory or otherwise.

6.3 They will conduct periodic conferences for the stakeholders on the importance/usage of any Act/Rules/Policy under which the Ministry collects data. They will also seek feedback from stakeholders for improving existing data sets and creating new ones, especially when there are issues of administrative jurisdictions and also to avoid duplication and redundancies.

6.4 They will facilitate the use of Administrative/Program statistics to reduce need of data collection through surveys thereby reducing the respondent burden and cost associated therewith.

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6.5 In areas where new statistics/indicators/data systems are required for improving decision making, they will look for opportunities to work together with MoSPI and the other Statistical Advisers in areas of shared interest, to improve the quality of official statistics, identifying priorities and sharing expertise/best practices to make the best use of available resources across organizations.

7. Statistical Standards and Metadata

7.1 The Statistical Advisers will make efforts to ensure that statistical standards as prescribed are adopted and adhered to in respect of all the official statistics being produced by their Ministry.

7.2 They will maintain a repository, preferably digital compendium of Datasets/Indicators/Registries, metadata on all statistical data elements produced in the Ministry. This repository will also be shared with MoSPI.

8. Statistical Dissemination and Data Sharing

8.1 The Statistical Advisers will assess the data flow time schedule and make efforts to bring out/publish an Advance Release Calendar (ARC) for the statistical products of their organisations in public domain, after competent approvals.

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8.2 To assist and educate users in assessing data quality, the Statistical Advisers will take actions towards facilitating dissemination of documentation on statistical methodology including component details.

8.3 The Statistical Advisers will facilitate exchange of data and other information and establish linkages with other Management Information System (MIS) that are in place, subject to legal restrictions and agreements on cost sharing, as applicable, and put in place a mechanism for the use of administrative sources by public authorities in official statistics.

8.4 In cases where the information produced is required for statistical purposes by another office in the Indian Statistical System, the Statistical Advisers will facilitate sharing of such data amongst Departments promptly, subject to legal provisions and data sharing agreements/MoUs as applicable. The Statistical Advisers will make efforts to leverage technology and contemporary methods of data sharing using API/Web Services etc.

8.5 During any instance of data-sharing, they shall ensure that the privacy of data providers (individuals or organisations) is safe-guarded at all times by applying appropriate anonymization algorithms. Further, data handling should be in line with government data security and privacy guidelines/laws.

9. Leveraging technology for greater efficiency and timeliness

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9.1 The Statistical Advisers will lead the digital and workforce transformation to facilitate collection, storage, processing, analysis and dissemination of statistical data.

10. Statistical Coordination with MoSPI

10.1 The Statistical Adviser will facilitate effective co-ordination of the concerned Ministry/Department with MoSPI on relevant statistical matters to meet the existing and emerging requirements for official statistics and ensure production of coherent/comparable statistics at the desired level of disaggregation.

10.2 The Statistical Adviser will identify the data gaps of the Administrative Ministries and include the same as agenda for discussion in the relevant fora of MoSPI for evolving ways to fill those gaps.
