

The Gambia

**Report on Observance of Standards and Codes (ROSC) Data Module and
Detailed Assessments Using the Data Quality Assessment Framework (DQAF)**

Prepared by

Magnus Ebo Duncan, Sylvester Gyamfi and Yaw Antwi Agyei

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The Report on the Observance of Standards and Codes (ROSC)—Data Module provides an assessment of The Gambia’s macroeconomic and social statistics against the recommendations of the General Data Dissemination System (GDDS) and Special Data Dissemination System (SDDS), complemented by an assessment of data quality based on the IMF’s Data Quality Assessment Framework (DQAF). The DQAF lays out internationally accepted practices in statistics, ranging from good governance in data-producing agencies to practices specific to datasets.

The datasets covered in this report are national accounts, Consumer Price Index, external debt, education statistics and sample survey data. The agencies that compile the datasets assessed in this report are the Gambia Bureau of Statistics (GBoS), Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs (MoFEA), and the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (MoBSE).

The report is based on self-assessment information provided by staff of the respective institutions after a training workshop conducted on 16-20 December 2019, and three weeks period allowed for the filling of the DQAF questionnaire. Staff of the respective institutions were trained to write the report and editing made by the consulting team.

¹ Magnus Ebo Duncan (PhD) is the Economic Expert and team leader for the DQAF project

² Sylvester Gyamfi is the Social Statistics Expert for the DQAF project

³ Yaw Antwi Agyei is the IT Expert for the DQAF project

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Abbreviations

ADMCC	Aid and Debt Management Coordinating Committee
AFRITAC	Africa Technical Assistance Centre
AU	African Union
BPM	Balance of Payments Manual
CBG	Central Bank of Gambia
CBG	Central Bank of Gambia
CCM	Coordinating Committee Meeting
COMSEC	Commonwealth Secretariat
COICOP	Classification of Individual Consumption by Purpose
CPI	Consumer Price Index
DLDM	Directorate for Loans and Debt Management
DQAF	Data Quality Assessment Framework
DSA	Debt Sustainability Analysis
ECOWAS	Economic Community for West African States
EFA	Education for All
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EU	European Union
GBoS	Gambia Bureau of Statistics
GDDS	General Data Dissemination System
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOAS	International Organic Accreditation Service
ISCED	International Standard Classification for Education
ISIC	International Standard Industrial Classification
MoBSE	Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education
MoFEA	Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs
MoFEA	Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs
MoHERST	Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSDS	National Strategy for the Development of Statistics
NSS	National Statistical System
PMO	Personnel Management Office
PMS	Performance Management System
PPI	Producer Price Index
ROSC	Report on Standards and Codes
SBC	State Building Contract
SDDS	Special Data Dissemination System
SNA	System of National Accounts
SUT	Supply and Use Table
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WFP	World Food Programme

REPORT ON OBSERVANCE OF STANDARDS AND CODES (ROSC)

Methodology

The DQAF evaluation framework covers the different steps in the compilation, processing and dissemination of statistics, and assesses the strengths and weaknesses on the available structures, based on the six DQAF dimensions:

1. Prerequisites of quality;
2. Assurance of integrity;
3. Methodological soundness;
4. Accuracy and reliability;
5. Serviceability; and
6. Accessibility

The assessment provides a comprehensive evaluation of the quality of data by comparing a country's practices with current international standards. To do so, a number of practices (fundamental principles to be observed for the production of good quality data), depending on the subject matter, are organised into sub-dimensions under the six dimensions mentioned. The essential part of the assessment is scoring each of these practices according to a four-point scale as shown below:

Key to symbols

Level of observance	Meaning
O = Practice observed	Current practices generally meet or achieve the objectives of DQAF internationally accepted practices without any significant deficiencies
LO = Practice largely observed	Some departures, but these are not seen as sufficient to raise doubts about the authority's ability to observe the DQAF practices
LNO = Practice largely not observed	Significant departures and authorities will need to take significant action to achieve observance
NO = Practice not observed	Most DQAF practices are not met

Scores assigned to each practice are then aggregated to arrive at a single score for each of the six DQAF dimensions. These scores are intended to indicate where efforts to improve statistical functions should be focused.

The assessment relied on information gathered through self-assessment of staff nominated by their respective institutions using a self-administered toolkit. In this approach, data per se have not been assessed but rather the entity for managing the data collection, processing, analysis and dissemination processes, are the ones that have been assessed. So, the team of consultants cannot confirm the reliability of the information given by the staff.

Following the evaluation of each DQAF practice, a global score based on Gambia's degree of compliance to all six DQAF dimensions – and relative to international standards and norms – has been calculated.

There was a data quality assessment for sample survey data. The evaluation framework for sample surveys covers the different steps in the conduct of surveys in The Gambia using the DQAF dimensions 0 and 1, and the customized US Standards and Guidelines for Statistical Surveys (September 2006), and assesses the strengths and weaknesses on the available structures, based on the six customized quality dimensions:

1. Prerequisites of quality;
2. Assurance of integrity;
3. Development of concepts, methods and design;
4. Data collection;
5. Processing and editing; and
6. Survey estimates, analysis and dissemination

Overall assessment

Below are the observations on the assessment of the quality of three socio-economic datasets—national accounts, external debt, and basic education statistics— conducted using the DQAF for the different statistics.

Prerequisites of quality

The Gambia has broadly effective legal frameworks to support the collection, processing and dissemination of statistics. The Statistics Act 2005 (which is currently under revision) gives the legal backing to The Gambia Bureau of Statistics (GBoS) to compile national accounts and consumer price index (CPI) statistics, while The Public Finance Act 2014 also empowers the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs (MoFEA) to compile and disseminate external debt statistics. For the Ministry for Basic and Secondary Education (MoBSE), the legal and institutional environment for the compilation and dissemination of education statistics is guided by the Education Act of 2009. The Education Sector Policy 2016 -2030 further reinforces this mandate.

Inadequate staff is a critical issue for both the national accounts and consumer price indices. For the national accounts, the existing numbers are only sufficient to produce annual GDP estimates, at current and constant prices, from both the production and expenditure approaches. Improvements and the extension of the national accounts will require a significant increase in the number of staff. In the case of the CPI, the two staff assigned to the Unit with only one of them fully available is unacceptable. Computer and storage facilities are inadequate. Proper and effective back-up systems are not available now, posing a great threat to data security. However, office accommodation is conducive to good working conditions. For MoFEA, current staff strength and their qualifications are inadequate for the compilation of debt statistics. However, sufficient resources such as computers, modern software and back-up devices are available, as well as conducive office environment. Staffing at MoBSE is, however, adequate but lack the necessary statistical

skills. There is no specific professional strategy for upgrading the skills of staff in statistics at MoBSE.

The main user consultations for the national accounts and CPI are done through the user producer forum, a major annual event that brings together users and key stakeholders in the NSS to discuss and review existing statistics and new developments. Quality as a cornerstone of statistical work is stressed when and where it is appropriate. There is no formally established process of regular consultation with end users of external debt statistics and also no instituted policy on quality. At MoBSE, quality as a cornerstone of statistical work is enforced at all levels of the statistics value chain.

Assurances of integrity

In all sectors, professionalism is encouraged through recruitment of highly qualified staff, graduate training opportunities in some cases, and on-the-job training. Guidelines exist for the professional and ethical conduct of staff, and it is found in section 46 of the General Orders of the Civil Service Code of Conduct document. Some statements on ethics are contained in the appointment letters given to new staff. However, there is no program to provide regular reminders to existing staff.

Methodological soundness

The general framework for compiling the national accounts is the System of National Accounts 2008 (2008 SNA) with 2013 as the base year. Currently, the published national accounts series cover only annual estimates for GDP measured from the production approach, at current and constant prices. Expenditure side of the GDP has been compiled but yet to be released. Household final consumption expenditure is estimated independently, but changes in inventory is included in the statistical discrepancy between the two estimation approaches.

The CPI compilation follows mostly the methodological guidelines prescribed in the Consumer Price Index Manual: Theory and Practice, published in 2004. There is an updated version of this manual and the draft was published in September 2019. GBoS recently rebased the CPI from the 2004 base year to 2019. The total number of goods and services in the basket has been updated from 207 in the 2004 series to 265 in the 2019 series.

Concepts and definitions in the compilation of external debt statistics are in broad conformity with international standards. However, improvements in scope, classification, and sectorization are needed as the debt data are classified into just the broad four institutional sectors. Recording is also on cash basis instead of accrual. MoBSE/EMIS adopts largely the standards prescribed by ISCED97 in the compilation of education statistics in The Gambia. The statistics compiled covers all aspects of education nationwide, with quite considerable disaggregation levels.

Accuracy and reliability

In the compilation of the national accounts, there exist weaknesses in the source data as large enterprises are reasonably well covered in surveys, but small enterprises are poorly

represented because most of them do not keep accounts, which has some effect on the quality of the estimates. The CPI, on the other hand, is well covered but faces the challenge of missing items in some of the selected markets.

Debt statistics are limited to central government, and there are plans to go into the municipal level. Software use for compilation of the external debt statistics is robust with a lot of in-built checks, and so is the software use by EMIS in the compilation of education statistics. Statistical discrepancies in intermediate data are always assessed and investigated.

A major revision of the compilation methodology of the national accounts was conducted in 2018 which includes the use of composite indices where applicable. However, no revision study has ever been undertaken for external debt statistics.

Serviceability

The GDP estimates are compiled annually, in conformity with the GDDS. Annual GDP estimates are produced in both provisional and revised figures and are consistent over time. The CPI is compiled monthly and published on the 15th day of the month. The quarterly debt service statistical bulletin meets the General Data Dissemination Standards (GDDS) on both periodicity and timelines. The disaggregated data conforms to that set out in the BPM6. External debt position data are consistent with the corresponding external debt transactions data, while the banking sector and central bank liabilities in the external debt statistics are largely consistent with monetary and financial statistics. dissemination period has been reduced from May to March since 2018. Education statistics are consistent over time, and there has been improvement in dissemination period since May 2018 by reducing the time from May to March. There are shortcomings in revision policy and practice, and revisions are not always identified and explained to the public.

Accessibility

National accounts and CPI statistics are published with summary analysis of trends and supported with tables and charts. The publications are in both hardcopies and electronic format and are made available on GBoS website. The external debt statistics are disseminated according to the classifications recommended by the Guide and BPM6, and in time series form with trend analysis, charts and tables that facilitate proper interpretation of the data. The statistics are available on the MoFEA website. Education statistics are also published on the website.

Only CPI has a preannounced dissemination schedule among all the statistics assessed.

Below is the overall assessment for sample survey data:

Prerequisites of quality

The legal mandate for conducting censuses and sample surveys is found in the Statistics Act 2005 and can be found same in the revised Statistics Act 2019. The ACT gives the Gambia

Bureau of Statistics (GBoS) additional powers to promote standardization in the collection, processing and dissemination of statistics. Thus, the ACT is superior to any other Act in the National Statistical System (NSS) for statistical activities in The Gambia.

Resources, both human and equipment, are inadequate. The Bureau is under-resourced to procure licenced software that can enhance production of statistics. There is no central backup system, posing a great threat to data storage and archiving. Office accommodation, furniture, utilities and transportation are adequate. Staff promotion are based on performance.

Processes are in place to ensure that quality statistics are produced. In surveys, best practices are followed during data collection, editing and weighting procedures and provision of an infrastructure for quality by recognising trade-offs, economies of scale, and interrelations between datasets. Respondent burden is a challenge to the Bureau because of the continuous surveys being conducted.

However, there is not much restrictions to staff having access to data that are not published.

Assurances of integrity

The legal environment for appointing and removing the Statistician General is adequate to promote professionalism, impartiality and independence. Recruitment and promotion of other staff are mostly but not always based on competence. The Statistics Act which spells out the terms and conditions under which statistics are collected, processed, and disseminated is available to the public through the Bureau's website.

Development of concepts, methods and design

A technical working group (TWG) that include potential users is formed during the survey planning stage to develop a concept note detailing the justification and rationale of conducting the survey. Quality control measures to monitor quality at different stages are documented and observed by Survey Quality Coordinators (QCs). The principle of representativeness is observed in the sampling procedures and survey functions are piloted before main data collection.

Data collection

The 2013 Population and Housing Census is the current sampling frame in place. It would be appropriate to update this sampling frame through listing of households in selected enumeration areas when new surveys are carried out.

Questionnaires design meet internationally accepted design principles. Potential survey respondents are not contacted before the survey begins. However, the survey forms provide introductory statements on the survey and its objectives. Adequate training is given to field staff and field monitoring procedures are robust.

Processing and editing of data

Data are adequately edited to mitigate or correct detectable errors. Editing takes place both on the field and during processing. Sampling and non-sampling errors are estimated. Data are not fully protected because of inadequate storage and archiving infrastructure. Documentation on sampling and non-sampling errors are prepared for some surveys only, while post-collection analysis is not carried out because of resource limitation.

Production of survey estimates, data analysis and dissemination

Survey estimates are done based on internationally accepted techniques in line with survey objectives. When assumptions are to be used, sensitivity analysis are conducted to validate the assumptions used. Proper documentation of procedures for developing estimates is done and kept for internal use.

There is no release calendar for surveys, and information on release dates are sent to the target audiences when analysis is finalized. Meanwhile, data are disseminated to all stakeholders at the same time. Unauthorized release of any survey material is an offense, and the Statistics ACT has prescribed the penalty for such breaches.

Detailed evaluation reports are often produced. Micro-data for public use are anonymized, and metadata are also prepared for the surveys. Disclosure limitation procedures are available but not made public.

Recommendations

Cross-cutting recommendations

- Make adequate provision for upgrading the skills of existing staff and for additional human and other resources for statistics especially for national accounts and external debt.
- Establish an overall revision policy and practice for the national statistical system and all its agencies and datasets.
- Establish a data user group committee to make recommendations on how the different statistical agencies can better serve the needs of statistical users.

National accounts

- Make adequate provision for computers and storage devices
- Encourage staff to undertake research, when resources permit
- The limited source data undermine the accuracy and reliability of the estimates and efforts to address the issue is very important
- Produce the sequence of accounts for the total economy and the rest of the world when resources and source data allow
- Efforts must be made to compile and publish quarterly national accounts
- Publish national accounts according to a preannounced schedule

Consumer Price Index

- Efforts should be made to periodically undertake revision studies between rebasing periods
- Efforts should be made to rebase the CPI at shorter intervals, in order for the statistics to properly represent price trends in the fast-changing world.

External debt statistics

- a) Improve the scope, classification, and sectorization of the statistics
- b) Recording should be made on accrual basis and not cash
- c) Expand the coverage of DLDM operations to cover local government level
- d) Establish data reconciliation committees to ensure that external debt statistics are reconciled and periodically document the status of such reconciliations.
- e) Establish a revision policy
- f) Publish external trade statistics according to a preannounced schedule

Sample surveys

- Adequate human and computer resources should be a major priority to improve efficiency of the Bureau
- Unpublished information should be restricted from staff who are not directly working on the project
- Fresh listing of households in selected enumeration areas should be undertaken for new surveys when the existing sampling frame is more than 5 years old
- Storage and archiving infrastructure must be provided for proper security of the survey data
- Detailed evaluation reports must be produced for all surveys and not for selected ones

Table 1: The Gambia: Data Quality Assessment Framework – ROSC summary results

	Elements assessed	National Accounts	CPI	External Debt Statistics	Education Statistics (Basic)
1.0 Prerequisite of quality		LO	LO	LO	
1.1	Legal and institutional environment	O	LO	LO	LO
1.2	Resources	LO	LO	LO	O
1.3	Relevance	O	O	O	O
1.4	Other quality management	LO	LO	LO	
2.0 Assurance of quality		LO	LO	LO	
2.1	Institutional integrity	LO	O	LO	O
2.2	Transparency	LO	LO	LO	O
2.3	Ethical standards	O	O	LNO	LO
3.0 Methodological soundness		LNO	LO	LO	
3.1	Concepts and definitions	O	LO	O	O
3.2	Scope	LNO	O	LNO	O
3.3	Classification/sectorisation	O	LO	LNO	O
3.4	Basis for recording	O	LO	O	O
4.0 Accuracy and reliability		LO	LO	LO	
4.1	Availability of source data	LO	LO	LNO	LO
4.2	Regularity of source data	LO	O	LNO	O
4.3	Statistical techniques	O	LO	LO	O
4.4	Validation of intermediate data and statistical outputs	LO	LO	LO	O
4.5	Revision studies	LNO	LNO	O	O
5.0 Serviceability		LO	LO	LO	
5.1	Periodicity and timeliness	O	LO	LO	O
5.2	Consistency	O	LO	O	O
5.3	Revision policy and practice	LO	LNO	LO	O
6.0 Accessibility		LO	LO	LO	
6.1	Data accessibility	LO	LO	LO	LO
6.2	Metadata accessibility	O	O	LO	LO
6.3	Assistance to users	O	LO	LNO	O
	OVERALL	LO	LO	LO	LO

Table 2: Data Quality Assessment Framework for Sample Surveys – Summary results

Elements assessed	O	LO	LNO	NO	Comments on the assessment
0. Prerequisite of quality		●			
0.1 Legal and institutional environment		X			Restrictions to staff for unpublished data is not strong.
0.2 Resources		X			Inadequate resources for some activities
0.3 Relevance	X				
0.4 Other Quality Management		X			Periodic review are not always done
1.0 Assurance of quality	●				
1.1 Institutional integrity	X				
1.2 Transparency		X			Advance notice not given when changes occur
1.3 Ethical standards	X				
2.0 Development of Concepts, Methods, and Design	●				
2.1 Survey Planning	X				
2.2 Survey Design	X				
2.3 Survey Pretesting	X				
3.0 Data Collection	●				
3.1 Developing Sampling Frames	X				
3.2 Required Notification to Potential Respondents	X				
3.3 Data Collection Methodology	X				
5.0 Processing and Editing		●			
5.1 Data Editing		X			
5.2 Nonresponse Analysis and Response Rate	X				
5.3 Coding			X		
5.4 Data Protection		X			Data protection from staff not too strong
5.5 Evaluation		X			Survey evaluation is done not for all surveys
6.0 Survey Estimates, Data Analysis and Dissemination	●				
6.1 Developing Estimates and Projections	X				
6.2 Analysis and Report Planning	X				
6.3 Dissemination	X				
6.4 Data Protection and Disclosure Avoidance	X				
6.5 Survey Documentation	X				
Survey Overall		●			

● Overall score for the quality dimension

DETAILED ASSESSMENTS USING THE DATA QUALITY ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK (DQAF)

NATIONAL ACCOUNTS

The following detailed information on indicators of statistical practices in the national accounts, was gathered from self-assessment using the DQAF tool by the Gambian officials.

0. PREREQUISITES OF QUALITY

This category in the DQAF identifies conditions within the agency in charge of producing statistics that have an impact on data quality. The elements within the category refer to the legal and institutional environment, resources, and quality awareness.

0.1 Legal and institutional environment — *The environment is supportive of statistics.*

0.1.1 The responsibility for collecting, processing, and disseminating the statistics is clearly specified.

The current Statistics Act 2005 which is revised and billed as Statistics Act 2019 (awaiting parliamentary approval) mandates the Gambia Bureau of Statistics (GBoS) as the authority for collecting, analyzing and disseminating official statistics, conducting population and housing censuses and ad hoc surveys in The Gambia. The authority to compile national accounts statistics is provided under Article 13(3b) of the Statistics Act 2005 and provided same in Article 24(3d) in the revised Act, Statistics Act 2019.

The Statistics Act is superior to any other Acts in the NSS for statistical activities in the country. Previously, there were conflicts in terms of which institutions are supposed to compute which indicators. Such problems are not uncommon in the NSS but overall, they have been resolved amicably.

0.1.2 Data sharing and coordination among data-producing agencies are adequate.

On annual basis, the Conference of Official Statistics (as required by Article 22(1) of the Statistics Act 2005) or the African Statistics Day is used to invite all the producers of statistics (Ministries, Departments and Agencies) to discuss issues, challenges, developments, and achievements in the production of statistics in the country. Some of the key issues discussed are on how to harmonize the statistics and how to coordinate production processes to ensure avoidance of duplication of both effort and resources.

The National Accounts unit has also signed several memoranda of understanding (MoUs) with key institutions such as the Gambia Revenue Authority, the Central Bank of Gambia (CBG), Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs (MoFEA) among others, who provide the bulk of the administrative data needs for the compilation of national accounts. This helps in the coordination of the data production activities of GBoS and its partners in the national statistical system (NSS).

0.1.3 Individual reporters' data are kept confidential and used for statistical purposes only.

Article 25(1) of the Statistics Act 2005 prohibits disclosure of any information collected on an individual, a household, business or department/organisation except for criminal prosecution. However, in the revised Statistics Act 2019, no exception is given for individual information to be disclosed. Confidential data are generally restricted to the staff of the Bureau unless otherwise requested. Also, aggregation rules as outlined in the SNA 2008 are strictly complied with, and this prevents disclosure of individual entity information.

Confidentiality of data is appropriately guarded during storage and during the process of the destruction of records. The work environment of GBoS is well secured and the computer systems are properly maintained, and records are password protected to ensure that individual data are secured. However, some staff easily go home with computers that have some data. Such events could lead to accidental disclosures.

In addition, in the preamble or the front page of data collection instruments, respondents' consent is sought. Key contents of the consent include informing clearly the respondent of confidentiality, of the purpose of the collected data, and of the entire voluntarily to participate in the Survey.

Punishment for staff who commit offence in connection with the confidentiality and disclosure provision is spelt out under Article 36 (5) in the Statistics Act 2005 and Article 44(6) in the revised Act.

0.1.4 Statistical reporting is ensured through legal mandate and/or measures to encourage response.

The Statistics Act 2005 which is revised and billed as Statistics Act 2019 mandates GBoS as the authority for collecting, analyzing and disseminating official statistics. However, in the event of noncompliance due to many reasons, penalty prescribed under Article 36(5) of the Statistical Act 2005 is hardly applied.

As an encouragement and ease of the potential burden, respondents are always informed of the importance of data they provide in nation building. Their concerns are also noted and addressed by the Bureau to ensure their continuous participation in the studies.

Respondent burden has been a key challenge for GBoS over the past few years. The high frequency of surveys excessive respondent burden. In the event that respondents could not respond to questionnaires because of some busy schedules, contacts are established to allow respondents enough time to complete the tools, this similarly ease burden and help built a stronger reputation with our respondents. Data suppliers are extremely important, and this is highly recognized by GBoS.

0.2 Resources — Resources are commensurate with needs of statistical programs.

0.2.1 Staff, facilities, computing resources, and financing are commensurate with statistical programs.

The staff available to compile national accounts is less than what the organogram specifies (seven). However, the four currently available staff for the National Accounts unit are generally qualified for the responsibility they are assigned, each at least with a master's degree. Since national accounts compilation has different milestones, the current staff require some additional special skills in some areas to allow the production of other relevant set of accounts necessary to serve the needs of all users.

Staff turnover is high, though salaries are comparative with other government institutions. Staff of the unit largely benefit from training program organize by regional bodies such as ECOWAS and international bodies like the IMF.

GBoS has reservation in the use of customized software in the compilation of national accounts. National accounts series are still manually compiled using Microsoft Excel. Repair works on broken down computers take a while. Proper and effective back-up systems are not available now, posing a great threat to data security. Relevant staff have datasets on their laptops but there exists no centralized back-up system.

The office is hosted in its own building, with proper lighting, heating and cooling system. Although electricity supply is not nationally stable, the office provides a backup system to remedy the situation. Vehicle is mostly available for national accounts data collection, but difficulties are encountered during periods where vehicles are commandeered for survey data collection.

Proper budgeting procedures are in place for all activities. In addition, an overall budget of a five-year statistical activities for the NSS is provided in the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS). The funding horizon is amenable as in the NSDS. There are concerns for donor fatigue as the government subventions are not enough for statistical activities in the NSS.

0.2.2 Measures to ensure efficient use of resources are implemented.

Periodic review of all statistical activities, including costings, are carried out as part of the monitoring system. Reviewing and comparing resources periodically for similar survey series are carried out, with the aim of ensuring resources are not unnecessarily wasted. Budgeting procedures are always in place to effectively allocate resources.

Staff are annually issued with a Performance Management System (PMS) that is to be filled. This is issued by the Directorate of Administration and Human Resources. The staff are to report all the activities they have carried out as in their respective job terms of reference (TOR). The PMS is to be approved by their Line Managers before onward submission for review by the governing council (Statistics Council).

Experts from outside are often engaged to carry out specific assignments pertaining to national accounts compilation such as rebasing. It is important to understand that there exist capacity gaps in most of the statistical processes and therefore consultants are often recruited to carry out such works.

0.3 Relevance — *Statistics cover relevant information on the subject field*

0.3.1 The relevance and practical utility of existing statistics in meeting users' needs are monitored.

During seminars, workshops and meetings, users are informed on specific aspects of current data. More importantly, users are also informed through press conference, print media, radio and television on specific aspects. GBoS annually organize the user producer forum, a major annual event that brings together users and key stakeholders in the NSS to discuss and review existing statistics and new developments. This event allows users, planners, academia etc. to review and identify issues where necessary. In addition, the User Satisfaction Survey (the latest conducted in 2018) also identify user needs, some of which are new data requirements etc.

Also, at the design stage of surveys, some stakeholders are invited to participate in the design of the tools so that modules relevant to their institutions can easily and properly be incorporated in the tool. Background search and reviews are done to map new developments before a particular survey is carried out.

The Bureau actively participates in AFRITAC, ECOWAS, AU, etc. events outside the country.

0.4 Other quality management — *Quality is a cornerstone of statistical work*

0.4.1 Processes are in place to focus on quality.

Both the governing council and management constantly stressed the need to produce statistics of high quality as it is also emphasized in the Statistics Act 2005. Quality issues are also raised in their speeches during conferences, workshops, and media engagements. During dissemination workshops, key data quality dimensions are also highlighted.

Trainings are provided to ensure capacity is built in areas that are extremely important for maintaining quality of statistical outputs. For example, training on sampling design and selection is an important step in ensuring that quality and sound methodologies are used in the production processes. GBoS has implemented some externally recognized quality measures.

0.4.2 Processes are in place to monitor quality during the planning and implementation of the statistical program.

There is a monitoring system in place to inform management about the quality level for most statistical activities. Comparisons are also made on response rates for example, of similar surveys and what actions need to be taken to maximize quality. Over the past few

years, GBoS has been guided by foreign experts in compilation of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) series, price statistics and other important statistical outputs. Reviews aimed at maintaining quality in statistical outputs are often carried out. Secondary data editing, other measures are in place during the survey periods to ensure consistency and minimizing errors.

1. ASSURANCES OF INTEGRITY

Integrity identifies features that support firm adherence to objectivity in the collection, compilation, and dissemination of statistics in order to maintain users confidence. Elements refer to the professionalism and ethical standards that should guide policies and practices, which should be reinforced by their transparency.

1.1 Institutional Integrity — *Statistical policies and practices are guided by professional principles.*

1.1.1 *Statistics are produced on an impartial basis.*

Article 15(1) of the Statistics Act 2005 gives the power to the President to appoint a Statistician-General in consultation with the Public Services Commission. Article 15(2d) mandates the Statistician-General to be professionally independent and impartial in the exercise of his/her duties, while Article 15(5) spells out the conditions under which the Statistician-General can be removed from office.

Recruitment and promotion of staff are based on expertise in statistical areas, although there have been deviations from such protocols over the past years. Once staff are recruited, they are also trained formally on various areas. They are sent overseas on short term training. Sometimes experts from outside are paid to conduct relevant trainings, which is an integral part of an overall strategy to increase the capacity of staff. Activities at GBoS largely promote culture of hard work, discipline, paying attention to methodological details and maintaining overall professionalism and good work ethics.

Concept notes that are developed, are reviewed and approved. These concept notes contain rationale and justifications for conducting a particular survey. Contents of the concept notes are subject to periodic reviews to ensure professionalism is maintained.

1.1.2 *Choice of data sources and statistical techniques as well as decisions about dissemination are informed solely by statistical considerations.*

The need and available data define the actual data source(s) used for compilation. Example, Provisional GDP estimates are usually reached at using administrative data while revised figures are completed by census. Statistical considerations inform decision on when and how to disseminate data for public consumption.

1.1.3 The appropriate statistical entity is entitled to comment on erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics.

GBoS provide for explanation of key concepts and definitions in its reports to prevent misinterpretation or misuse of the statistics produced. Although trainings are conducted to educate journalists on the use and interpretation of statistics, not much is done to monitor what they report especially on the social media.

1.2 Transparency — *Statistical policies and practices are transparent*

1.2.1 The terms and conditions under which statistics are collected, processed, and disseminated are available to the public.

The Statistics Act 2005 has been disseminated through the GBoS website and it is freely downloadable. During seminars, workshops, etc. people are informed about the existent of the GBoS website for their data and other statistical needs. The new Act, when approved by parliament, will be disseminated on the website. Advocacy on the Statistics Act is actively done during workshops, seminars and conferences to remind audiences about the mandate of GBoS and its activities. Statistical publications often include details of GBoS address and also the website where users can easily access the publications etc.

1.2.2 Internal governmental access to statistics prior to their release is publicly identified.

Internal government access to statistics is often not entertained. This is a step to avoid interference and ensuring independence of the Bureau.

1.2.3 Products of statistical agencies/units are clearly identified as such.

Disseminated data has clear identification of GBoS as the authoritative source. GBoS is clearly identified in joint publication series with other stakeholder institutions. For the past years, for example, nutrition studies are jointly conducted by GBoS and National Nutrition Agency. The Bureau is identified in the relevant parts of the reports. Ascribing publications of works to GBoS is something the Bureau encourages. Data supplied by the Bureau has to be referenced clearly.

1.2.4 Advance notice is given of major changes in methodology, source data, and statistical techniques.

When GBoS migrate to new methodology, user communities are informed during conferences, workshops and through media briefings. Small shifts are not often communicated but they are written in the methodology part of reports.

1.3 Ethical standards — *Policies and practices are guided by ethical standards*

1.3.1 Guidelines for staff behaviour are in place and are well known to the staff.

Ethical standards guiding staff behaviors are clearly stated in the GBoS Staff Service Rule. This document provides guidelines including potential penalties for staff who violate ethics. Every staff of the Bureau is issued with this guiding principle and required to abide by it.

2. Methodological Soundness

Methodological soundness refers to the application of international standards, guidelines, and agreed practices. Application of such standards, which are specific to the dataset, is indicative of the soundness of the data and fosters international comparability. Elements refer to the basic building blocks of concepts and definitions, scope, classification and sectorization, and basis for recording.

2.1 Concepts and definitions - *Concepts and definitions used are in accord with internationally accepted statistical frameworks.*

2.1.1 The overall structure in terms of concepts and definitions follows internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices.

Compilation of the Gambia National Accounts is strictly guided by the SNA 2008. GBoS migrated from the 1993 System of National Accounts (SNA 1993) to SNA 2008 and have since rebased its GDP by production approach with the most recent base year of 2013 while back casting the old series to the old base line of 2004, covering the new changes and additional recommendations such as those concerning the separation and allocation of Financial Intermediation Services Indirectly Measured (FISIM) and the informal sector.

2.2 Scope — *The scope is in accord with internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices*

2.2.1 The scope is broadly consistent with internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices.

Annual GDP is produced by production approach at both current and constant prices and in accordance with the SNA 2008. This follows the rebasing of the GDP by production in 2017/18 using a 2013 base year. The main data source is the economic census conducted in 2014 which covered various economic activities in the Gambia. However, the sequence of accounts including the financial and non-financial sector accounts, the rest of the world accounts, the general government accounts etc. as prescribed by the SNA 2008, and Supply and Use Tables (SUTs) are not presently being produced by GBoS national accounts, given limitations in human capital, data and funds. Nonetheless, all the production and asset boundaries for the products produced under the national accounts are in accordance with SNA 2008.

GBoS has therefore updated its national accounts benchmark year for both the Production and Expenditure approaches of compiling GDP estimates. The time series data for 2004-2018 were revised and rebased using the new benchmark year 2013 for both constant and

current price estimates. Independent time series data at current and constant 2013 prices were estimated for all components of GDP by expenditure except for changes in inventories which is included in the statistical discrepancy. The rebasing of GDP(E) was based on a mix of direct information on statistical and administrative data sources and indirect information including national accounts estimates on the production side.

2.3 Classification/sectorization — *Classification and sectorization systems are in accord with internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices.*

2.3.1 Classification/sectorization systems used are broadly consistent with internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices

The classification and sectorization used in the compilation of national accounts are in broad conformity with internationally recommended systems. That is, the 2008 SNA is followed to classify: institutional units, transactions, other flows.

The classification of economic activities are in accordance with the fourth revision of the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC), and private final consumption, non-profit institutions serving households, and general government final consumption expenditures classified according to Classification of Individual Consumption by Purpose (COICOP).

2.4 Basis for recording — *Flows and stocks are valued and recorded according to internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices.*

2.4.1 Market prices are used to value flows and stocks.

All valuation rules used in national accounts compilation are in accordance with SNA, except where data is not concisely available, in which case the SNA has given guidelines to proceed. Market prices are used to value of stocks and flows, wherever they are practically obtainable. In instances such as construction sector output where market prices are not directly observable, the appropriate proxy as prescribed by the SNA 2008 are employed, with correct documentation for replication.

2.4.2 Recording is done on an accrual basis.

Transactions and flows are recorded on an accrual basis. That is, work-in-progress is recorded in the period it is produced; Government-related transactions, particularly, taxes and subsidies on products, expenditures and revenues. are recorded on an accrual basis, that is, at the time the cost is incurred or benefit actually realized.

2.4.3 Grossing/netting procedures are broadly consistent with internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices.

Grossing and netting up procedures are generally consistent with the System of National accounts 2008.

3. Accuracy and Reliability

Accuracy and reliability identify features that contribute to the goal that data portray reality. Elements refer to identified features of the source data, statistical techniques, and supporting assessments and validation.

3.1 Source data — Source data available provide an adequate basis to compile statistics.

3.1.1. Source data are collected from comprehensive data collection programs that take into account country-specific conditions.

The data sources are kept under continuous review to ensure that the data collection program is comprehensive, although, this is not as swipec as the ever-evolving business environment. For formal businesses registered for tax purposes, information is quite sufficient. However, a large number of businesses in the Gambia are informal and not registered. This sector of the economy is hardly captured, with no informal sector survey or a related data source.

A business register exists, and it is compiled from an economic census. The latest register was compiled from the 2014 economic census. The register is not updated until a new economic census is conducted. However, large businesses that spring up between inter-censal periods are captured and covered in the compilation of national accounts. The micro and small enterprises pose a major challenge and undermine coverage of activities in the GDP compilation.

Sampling is properly done, with proper stratification and a good level of representativeness. All sectors are represented, and activities are classified in great detail. All survey questionnaires are well piloted, and they follow the best principles of questionnaire design. Economic survey by the National accounts of GBoS is normally preceded by an economic census, which considers a complete count of all traceable business enterprises in the Gambia (Formal enterprises). This form the frame and provide the benchmark for the economic survey (Business establishment survey).

Given the detailed questionnaires for the surveys, data collected are quite detailed to capture output, intermediate consumption expenditure, capital formation and other details. Household income and expenditure survey (the Integrated household survey) is conducted regularly for every five years. At least for the last three waves, this provided the necessary information for the compilation of the household final consumption expenditure for the purpose of GDP by expenditure approach.

Detailed data are available to measure output, intermediate consumption, fixed capital formation, and final consumption expenditure of government services from the Integrated

Household survey. Data on financial corporations are normally sourced from the Central Bank of the Gambia, while that of non-financial corporations are obtained from the Gambia revenue authority (GRA). Data from administrative records are adequate, and the gaps in terms of detail and coverage are known and accounted for. However, it is worth emphasizing, sectors such as agriculture, the informal economy etc. for which administrative data do not exist, there are still some noticeable gaps worth resolving.

Both Producer Price Index (PPI) and Consumer Price Index (CPI) are used to deflate current price estimates. The national accounts team work closely with the price statistics unit for the compilation of detailed level of price indices that are consistent with the variables being deflated.

Periodic meetings are not held with the business community to solicit their cooperation in collection of data (through enterprise surveys, surveys of corporate sector, etc.) and to identify new developments that need to be taken into account in the national accounts compilation system. Meetings with the business community are only held when enterprise surveys and the like are going to be conducted. However, continuous discussions are maintained with the GRA who provide the financial statements and other information on most enterprises.

3.1.2 Source data reasonably approximate the definitions, scope, sectorization, classifications, valuation, and time of recording required.

Source data are generally consistent with the definitions, scope, and classifications needed for the national accounts statistics. Thorough assessments are made to ensure that data collected allow compilation of estimates according to international guidelines. All administrative data used for national accounts compilation are highly consistent with the provisions of the SNA 2008 and provides a good proximation to the measures assigned. Given censuses, data collection for benchmarking exercises provide quite a good coverage of the economic activities. All large businesses are covered, as well as a sample of medium, minor and micro enterprises.

3.1.3 Source data are timely

Data collection and processing timetables are adequate to meet timeliness and periodicity for disseminating the national accounts statistics. Data collection especially on regular activities are continuous, and this provides enough information to meet the timeliness requirement.

3.2 Assessment of source data — *Source data are regularly assessed*

3.2.1 Source data—including censuses, sample surveys, and administrative records— are routinely assessed, e.g., for coverage, sample error, response error, and non-sampling error; the results of the assessments are monitored and made available to guide statistical processes

Information about sampling errors for each of the surveys conducted is monitored on a regular basis. Information is available about non-sampling errors: survey operations, biases, over/under-coverage, misclassification, processing, and nonresponse, however, this is not a public information. The source data are analyzed to correct for underreporting/misreporting, in particular to check for: temporal consistency; and consistency with other related source data. Survey data are properly checked, and this is done both at the time of the survey as well as during data processing and report writing. National accounts team take time to discuss with the various data providers so that the accuracy of the reported data is properly monitored.

3.3 Statistical techniques — *Statistical techniques employed conform to sound statistical procedures*

3.3.1 Data compilation employs sound statistical techniques to deal with data sources

Data compilation procedures are sound; procedures for imputation and adjustment for nonresponse are soundly based, appropriate use is made of ancillary, and benchmark information in compiling population estimates. Data use for national accounts compilation is well validated. The validation includes comparing different sources of data for consistency and other information on the current state of the economy.

3.3.2 Other statistical procedures (e.g., data adjustments and transformations, and statistical analysis) employ sound statistical techniques

Statistical procedures used to incorporate unobserved activities (including informal, potential hidden activities, or illegal activities) follow a detailed, case-by-case, approach using specific sources that are most closely related to the estimated variables and pertinent to the reference period. Estimates for these activities are computed indirectly using labor input information/data from the Gambia Labor Force Survey (GLFS) before they are added to the total economy.

For GDP by production, output estimates are compiled at the level of all divisions of the classification, intermediate consumption is computed for specific firms and then grossed up, and the estimates of value-added use fixed ratios which are mostly below five years. That is, in the estimation of value added for the most important industrial groups (e.g., ISIC one-digit level), the use of fixed ratios that are more than five years old is limited. The specific guidelines as stated for the valuation of; owner occupied dwelling, FISIM, non-life insurance, work in progress, inventory valuation, consumption of fixed capital, the used of accrual basis of valuation, deflation methods and volume changes are specifically adhered to and are computed as prescribed by SNA 2008.

Although the first GDP expenditure figures are not yet published, estimates are obtained independently from the GDP production unless where it is necessary to relate certain expenditure to particular production item. Household final consumption expenditure is compiled at the one-digit level of the COICOP classification. However, the estimates are

presented at the aggregated level. Similarly, Government final consumption expenditure is also compiled by the provisions of COFOG and GFCF is compiled by activities and to great detail asset types in some instance where applicable. As stated earlier, changes in inventories are included in the statistical discrepancy.

3.4 Assessment and validation of intermediate data and statistical outputs — *Intermediate results and statistical outputs are regularly assessed and validated*

3.4.1 Intermediate results are validated against other information where applicable

The data compiled from the main sources used to compile national accounts statistics are checked against other independent data sources. Our review works allow for proper check of the various data sources, help compare after extraction and make provision for consistency.

3.4.2 Statistical discrepancies in intermediate data are assessed and investigated

The discrepancies in intermediate data are routinely investigated and measures taken to address them.

3.4.3 Statistical discrepancies and other potential indicators of problems in statistical outputs are investigated

Supply and use tables are not available, so they cannot be used to investigate discrepancies. Difference between the different approaches of GDP compilation where realized is presented as a discrepancy in the GDP expenditure tables.

3.5 Revision studies — *Revisions, as a gauge of reliability, are tracked and mined for the information they may provide*

3.5.1 Studies and analyses of revisions and/or updates are carried out and used internally to inform statistical processes

The National Account unit have not been engaged in specific review studies to check on and analyze the revisions besides the regular revision of the series done annually. Notwithstanding, it is noted that studies to investigate the sources of errors, omissions, and fluctuations in the data and explain the methods of revising the data can greatly help to ease future compilation exercises.

4. Serviceability

Serviceability focuses on practical aspects of how well a dataset meet users' needs. Elements refer to the extent to which data are relevant, produced and disseminated in a timely fashion with appropriate periodicity, are consistent internally and with other datasets, and follow a predictable revisions policy.

4.1 Periodicity and timeliness — *Periodicity and timeliness follow internationally accepted dissemination standards*

4.1.1 Periodicity follows dissemination standards

The GDP estimates are compiled annually, in conformance with the GDDS. Annual GDP estimates are produced in both provisional and revised figures on two particular dates. Provisional estimates of GDP are disseminated at the end of the first quarter of the succeeding year, while the final (revised estimates) are published exactly a year after the provisional figures were disseminated.

4.1.2 Timeliness follows dissemination standards

The provisional GDP figures are available within six to seven months of the end of the reference year, in line with the General Data Dissemination System (GDDS).

4.2 Consistency — *Statistics are consistent within the dataset, over time, and with major datasets*

4.2.1 Statistics are consistent within the dataset

GDP estimates are consistent by sectors and economic activities. The national account series presented give great detail of GDP by expenditure and activity component. In any case a discrepancy exists between different approaches to GDP compilation, the difference is clearly presented as a statistical discrepancy. The discrepancy between the production and expenditure estimates is ± 3 .

4.2.2 Statistics are consistent or reconcilable over a reasonable period of time

GDP series are available for the last decade. This is for both GDP by production and expenditure approach. Data series are updated. New baseline figures are back casted, and the forward series are also provided with the new updates. Statistical reports provide detail information on methodology and in a good detail the steps needed for continuity.

4.2.3 Statistics are consistent or reconcilable with those obtained through other data sources and/or statistical frameworks

The financial sector data, external trade data and central government data used in the national accounts are totally consistent with their source systems.

4.3 Revision policy and practice — *Data revisions follow a regular and publicized procedure*

4.3.1 Revisions and/or updates follow a regular and transparent schedule

The practice of revisions (e.g., from provisional estimates, for weight updates, for changes in methodology) follows a predictable pattern of which users of statistics are informed. Provisional estimates are usually published on the first quarter of the next year while finals, a year after, and this is known and communicated to key stakeholders.

4.3.2 Preliminary and/or revised /updated data are clearly identified

At the time of data dissemination, users are informed whenever data are preliminary or revised.

This is shown on the publications

4.3.3 Studies and analyses of revisions are made public

There are no publicly available analyses of revisions. Differences are not specifically reported. Nevertheless, the publication provides the sort of revisions made.

5. Accessibility

Accessibility deals with the availability of information to users. Elements refer to the extent to which data and metadata are clear and easily available and to which assistance to the user is adequate to help them find and use the data

5.1 Data accessibility — Statistics are presented in a clear and understandable manner, forms of dissemination are adequate, and statistics are made available on an impartial basis

5.1.1 Statistics are presented in a way that facilitates proper interpretation and meaningful comparisons (layout and clarity of text, tables, and charts)

Publications provide summary analysis of trends supported with charts and tables. Datasets are published with a detail level of disaggregation (4-digit ISIC rev. 4).

5.1.2 Dissemination media and format are adequate

Publication of national accounts statistics are in both Microsoft excel and in PDF format. The most recent statistics are accessible together with the time series for free upon request. Publications are provided on the GBoS website as well as the GBoS portal. Also, hard copies can be accessed at the office for all statistical reports on national accounts statistics.

5.1.3 Statistics are released on a preannounced schedule

The statistics are not released on a preannounced schedule. Publication of national accounts are generally provided at the website for the public to access. GBoS is working towards disseminating national accounts statistics through press releases. This is planned to begin with the publication of the GDP by expenditure.

5.1.4 Statistics are made available to all users at the same time

The public is informed of the statistics being released and of the procedures to access them (e.g., Internet, publications) Because there is no preannounced date for dissemination, it cannot be said that the information is made available to all at the same time.

5.1.5 Statistics not routinely disseminated are made available upon request

Besides having the publications published in the official website and data portal, there are channels that data request can be made. Requests, with specific data needs, are addressed

to the Statistician-General who minutes it to a staff of the unit (National Accounts)., Requests are only responded to when they pass through the official channel.

5.2 Metadata accessibility — *Up-to-date and pertinent metadata are made available*

5.2.1 Documentation on concepts, scope, classifications, basis of recording, data sources, and statistical techniques is available, and differences from internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices are annotated

Information on concepts, definitions, classifications, data sources, compilation methods, statistical techniques, and other relevant methodological aspects and procedures are well documented. All departures, which are quite uncommon are as well documented and often presented in the reports and internal documentations provided for internal use. Survey methods and sources are clearly explained, and administrative data sources are defined.

5.2.2 Levels of detail are adapted to the needs of the intended audience

To a very large extent, the level of detail provided by the national accounts are in accordance with the standards. In some instance, specific groups may require a greater/deeper detail of certain data, however, given the requirements confidentiality of individual data, National accounts is not able to fulfil the need this specific audience.

5.3 Assistance to users — *Prompt and knowledgeable support service is available*

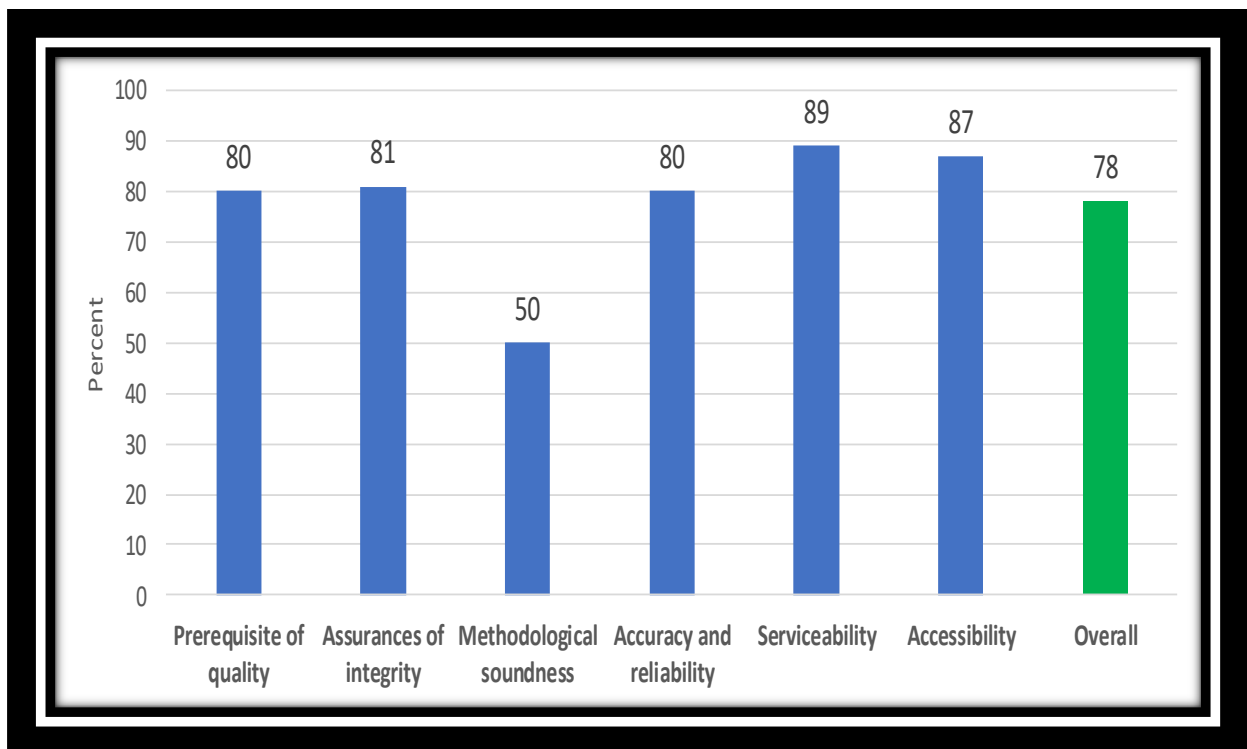
5.3.1 Contact points are publicized

Contact details are provided at the back page of all statistical reports of GBoS. Also, national accounts publications which are available on the website provide information on contact points where those in need of further clarification can go. The Department of coordination, dissemination and quality control of GBoS monitor data requests through the contact information provided on the website, portal or statistical reports.

5.3.2 Publications, documents, and other services, including information on any charges, are widely available

All statistical reports of the national accounts are available to the general public. Individual access is granted free of charge.

Figure 1: The Gambia: Level of observance of international principles and good practices in the compilation of national accounts statistics using DQAF May 2012



CONSUMER PRICE INDEX

The following detailed information on indicators of statistical practices in the CPI, was gathered from self-assessment using the DQAF tool by the Gambian officials.

3. PREREQUISITES OF QUALITY

This category in the DQAF identifies conditions within the agency in charge of producing statistics that have an impact on data quality. The elements within the category refer to the legal and institutional environment, resources, and quality awareness.

0.1 Legal and institutional environment — *The environment is supportive of statistics.*

3.1.1 *The responsibility for collecting, processing, and disseminating the statistics is clearly specified.*

The Statistics Act 2005 mandates Gambia Bureau of Statistics (GBoS) as the authority for collecting, analyzing and disseminating official statistics, conducting population and housing censuses and ad hoc surveys in The Gambia. Further, it empowers GBoS to coordinate and monitor the National Statistical System (NSS) to ensure sustainability in the production of credible data. Also corroborated in the Act is the authority conferred on GBoS for the compilation of consumer price indices.

The Statistics Act 2005 is above all other Acts in the National Statistical System for statistical activities in the Gambia.

3.1.2 *Data sharing and coordination among data-producing agencies are adequate.*

GBoS organizes on an annual basis, the user-producer forum as a way of commemorating the African Statistics Day. The forum attracts personnel from Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) that are involved in the use and production of statistics in the country. Discussions during the forum includes among other things the developments and challenges in the production of statistics and how to mitigate them as well as how to harmonize to save resources and efforts.

The CPI Unit does not use secondary data for the compilation of the indices but supply other institutions with raw price data for their own analysis. Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the World Food Program (WFP) who uses the raw data for their monthly analysis.

3.1.3 *Individual reporters' data are kept confidential and used for statistical purposes only.*

According to the Statistics Act 2005, individual data usage for any other reason such as, legal proceedings, administrative decision-making etc., by any person, institution or international bodies is against the Act.

Provisions in the Act prohibits unauthorized disclosure of confidential statistical information. Any staff of the Bureau who being in possession of any information which to his or her knowledge has been disclosed in contravention of the Act has committed an offence and liable to punishment. Aggregation methods agreed upon is used to maintain the confidentiality of the individual records; data is disseminated in aggregated form, which prevents the disclosure of individual records. Standard procedures are applied to anonymize individual data. Hard copies that are no more important to the Bureau are usually destroyed to avoid leakage of confidential information. All data collected by GBoS are carefully stored.

The GBoS premises is well secured and the computer systems are well maintained to ensure that individual data remained secured. Although some staff carry their laptops home to continue their unfinished assignments but even in that, the confidentiality of the individual data is maintained. Though unit record requests are not common, it is catered for in the Statistics Act that, any staff who is handling the anonymized individual data for further research project subject to statistical confidentiality, will have to sign an undertaking first.

The front page of all data collection instruments asks for the consent of the respondent after clearly explaining the purpose of the survey, the confidentiality of the response and that it is voluntary to participate in the process. Provisions in the Act prohibits unauthorized disclosure of confidential statistical information. Any staff of the Bureau who being in possession of any information which to his or her knowledge has been disclosed in contravention of the Act has committed an offence and liable to punishment.

3.1.4 Statistical reporting is ensured through legal mandate and/or measures to encourage response.

The Statistics Act 2005 mandates GBoS as the authority for collecting, analysing and disseminating official statistics, conducting population and housing censuses and ad hoc surveys in The Gambia.

The monthly nature of collecting price data and from the same respondent all the time if possible is a factor that can cause respondent burden. This has been a challenge for GBoS since it is difficult for GBoS to do something in that area as that is the recommended practice for collecting price data. Importance of the respondents in the data collection process is highly recognised by GBoS, and thus respondents are all the time reminded of the importance of their response towards the success of the process and the development of the nation as a whole. The interviewers are always mindful of the respondent's concerns to ensure their cooperation and participation in the process.

3.2 Resources — Resources are commensurate with needs of statistical programs.

3.2.1 Staff, facilities, computing resources, and financing are commensurate with statistical programs.

Human resource is still inadequate in the Consumer Price Index unit; at least four qualified staff should be working on the compilation and analysis of the index instead of the current two. One staff is currently pursuing her master's degree. Most of the other staff need to be trained to obtain the necessary capacity and qualifications to be able to carry out their statistical operations. The identified capacity gaps need to be closed.

Trained staff are highly motivated through some form of motivations thus the staff turnover is very low. The salary is reasonable compared to other government institutions in the country. The salary attracts staff from other institutions.

Complete back-up systems for the computers are limited and any unforeseen disaster will result in data loss. The bureau lacks central back up system to act as retrieval point should there be any data loss. Printers and photocopiers are not enough and this at times cause delays in timely dissemination of data.

The office environment is conducive as both lighting and cooling systems are good and there is a standby generator that is used in case of power cuts to avoid any interruptions in work.

Transport is available for data collection though not enough as only data collectors have motor bikes while their supervisors do not have. Vehicles are also available for other related activities.

Annual budgeting procedures are in place for all activities. At the end of every year, a new budget is prepared for the activities for the coming year. In addition, budget for the medium-term statistical activities to be carried out are included in the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS). Government subvention caters for some of the activities but most activities are funded by donors and these may result into donor fatigue.

3.2.2 Measures to ensure efficient use of resources are implemented.

The Directorate of Administration and Human Resources carry out performance management assessments. The assessment forms are issued to all the staff to be filled and rated by their supervisors. In this form, staff have the opportunity to report all the activities they have been involved in during the period under review. The undertaken activities include assignments in their Terms of Reference (TOR) as well as other activities assigned to them by their supervisors. The Human Resource Unit then forwarded the completed forms to the GBoS governing council for review and consideration.

External Technical Assistance are available to help in carrying out some statistical work. For example, the IMF assisted the Price Statistics Unit to complete the rebasing of the CPI. Capacity gaps still exist in some areas where expert interventions are required so as to adopt and follow international best practices. Periodic reviews for statistical activities, including costings, are carried out as part of the monitoring system. Reviewing and comparing resources periodically for similar survey series are done. Proper budgeting

procedures are always followed to help in the effective allocation of resources. These are done to avoid misallocation of resources.

0.3 Relevance — *Statistics cover relevant information on the subject field*

0.3.1 The relevance and practical utility of existing statistics in meeting users' needs are monitored.

A major annual event that brings together users and key stakeholders in the National Statistical System (NSS) to discuss and review existing statistics and new developments is the Conference of Official Statistics organized by GBoS and partners. This event allows users, planners, academia etc. to review and identify issues where necessary. GBoS staff always participate in international meetings, trainings and conferences relating to statistics. Some of the international and regional institutions which invite GBoS are African Development Bank (AfDB), West Africa Institute for Financial and Economic Management (WAIFEM), Africa Regional Technical Assistance Centre West 2 (AFRITAC-West 2), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), etc. Some of these programmes are held in the country.

The User Satisfaction Survey was conducted to identify user needs, including new data requirements. Harmonisation with sister countries also help to identify new data needs.

0.4 Other quality management — *Quality is a cornerstone of statistical work*

0.4.1 Processes are in place to focus on quality.

Producing quality data is always emphasised by the management of GBoS and they are very concerned about the production of high-quality statistics. These are also stressed on during trainings, dissemination programmes and workshops.

Trainings are conducted to build capacity of the technicians for producing and maintaining quality statistics. For example, training on rebasing of the CPI is important in producing quality indices. GBoS has implemented some externally recognised quality measures to have quality statistical outputs. Data editing, and review for consistencies are always carried out with the aim of maintaining high quality statistics. Other review methods are also carried out during surveys.

Information on CPI is published and sent to several recipients through email and on the GBoS website for a broader usage. Dissemination of data through the website enable users to have easy access to the CPI data.

0.4.2 Processes are in place to monitor quality during the planning and implementation of the statistical program.

There is a monitoring system in place to inform management about the quality level for most statistical activities. Data is edited, compared to identify outliers; all these are geared towards maximizing the quality of the statistical products. GBoS has been guided by external consultants in the production of statistics such as the CPI rebasing which was completed recently.

4. ASSURANCES OF INTEGRITY

Integrity identifies features that support firm adherence to objectivity in the collection, compilation, and dissemination of statistics in order to maintain users confidence. Elements refer to the professionalism and ethical standards that should guide policies and practices, which should be reinforced by their transparency.

4.1 Institutional Integrity — *Statistical policies and practices are guided by professional principles.*

4.1.1 *Statistics are produced on an impartial basis.*

Article 15(1) of the Statistics Act 2005 gives the power to the President to appoint a Statistician-General in consultation with the Public Services Commission. Article 15(2d) mandates the Statistician General to be professionally independent and impartial in the exercise of his/her duties, while Article 15(5) spells out the conditions under which the Statistician General can be removed from office.

Recruitment and promotion are to be based on staff qualifications, but this sometimes change based on other considerations. The concept notes that contains the reasons forwarded for conducting any survey is developed, reviewed and approved. These notes are updated to maintain the professionalism of the Bureau.

GBoS staff are formally trained on the job by their supervisors and or technical assistance from regional and international bodies. Staff are also sent on short term training, visit to other statistical offices to learn the job etc. All these are geared towards enhancing the capacity of the staff.

Working at GBoS entails being discipline, hardworking, adopting and following international best practices in producing statistics and maintaining professionalism. Peer reviews are rarely conducted and should be encouraged.

4.1.2 *Choice of data sources and statistical techniques as well as decisions about dissemination are informed solely by statistical considerations.*

Primary data is used to compile price statistics and these are always available - the data is collected directly from the vendors at the selling points. Although statistical considerations inform decision on when and how to disseminate data for public consumption but timely data is also essential for appropriate policies. CPIs are compiled and published on a monthly basis.

1.1.3 *The appropriate statistical entity is entitled to comment on erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics.*

All reports by GBoS are accompanied by key definitions and concepts for the understanding of the users. These help to reduce misinterpretation of the data. Journalist are also trained to understand these concepts to enable them report accurately. A two-day training was conducted recently for the media and other institutions that use the CPI to understand the concepts of the CPI and how is it used by the audience or users.

1.2 Transparency — *Statistical policies and practices are transparent*

1.2.1 The terms and conditions under which statistics are collected, processed, and disseminated are available to the public.

The GBoS educates users about the 2005 Statistics Act through workshops, surveys and censuses using excerpts from the Act. Similar education is done during the commemoration of World Statistics Day, African Statistics Day, World Population Day and during meetings with players within the National Statistical System (NSS) and the public. All CPI documents or publications specify or spell out clearly the use of the GBoS website in case they need more information and there is provision for telephone numbers of contact persons for cases of inquiries.

1.2.2 Internal governmental access to statistics prior to their release is publicly identified.

The CPI is not released to any governmental organization prior to dissemination. The CPI, when completed, is disseminated same day and time to all users.

1.2.3 Products of statistical agencies/units are clearly identified as such.

All CPI publications clearly have the GBoS's name, logo and insignia printed on them. Production of the CPI is exclusive to GBoS and there is no joint publication with another agency. GBoS requests from users to clearly reference or cite its statistics when the data compiled by GBoS is used in reproducing other statistics or policy reports.

1.2.4 Advance notice is given of major changes in methodology, source data, and statistical techniques.

Data users are normally well informed about changes in methodologies, data sources and statistical techniques through Metadata reports and these are shared with users on the GBoS's website and through bilateral engagements in plenaries and during workshops or dissemination workshops of the CPI.

1.3 Ethical standards — *Policies and practices are guided by ethical standards*

1.3.1 Guidelines for staff behaviour are in place and are well known to the staff.

GBoS has a service rule that guides management and staff on ethical standards of the office. Therefore, all GBoS staff are issued with a copy of the service rule to inform them of ethical standards and each member of staff signs oath of secrecy.

5. Methodological Soundness

Methodological soundness refers to the application of international standards, guidelines, and agreed practices. Application of such standards, which are specific to the dataset, is indicative of the soundness of the data and fosters international comparability. Elements refer to the basic building blocks of concepts and definitions, scope, classification and sectorization, and basis for recording

5.1 Concepts and definitions - *Concepts and definitions used are in accord with internationally accepted statistical frameworks.*

2.1.1 The overall structure in terms of concepts and definitions follows internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices.

The CPI compilation by GBoS follows the guidelines of the International Consumer Price Index manual and follows classifications such as Classification of Individual Consumption by Purpose (COICOP). Concepts and definitions are followed as prescribed by the Consumer Price Index manual especially for food and non-food items periodic price measurements. Hence, the level of details of the CPI in terms of products, prices, and classifications is sufficient for detailed analysis.

2.2 Scope — *The scope is in accord with internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices*

2.2.1 The scope is broadly consistent with internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices.

The CPI compilation follows the guidelines stated in the CPI compilation manual and follows the Classification of Individual Consumption by Purpose (COICOP) 1999. Differences between the scope and coverage between the CPI and capital formation final expenditure are followed to an extent.

2.3 Classification/sectorization — *Classification and sectorization systems are in accord with internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices.*

2.3.1 Classification/sectorization systems used are broadly consistent with internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices

The classification of COICOP follows Classification of Individual Consumption by Purpose (COICOP) 1999 which is in conformity with international standards.

2.4 Basis for recording — *Flows and stocks are valued and recorded according to internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices.*

2.4.1 Market prices are used to value flows and stocks.

Prices of items for the CPI are collected from retail outlets / markets. These are prices that consumers pay for the goods/services. Products included in the CPI basket are well

specified, thus reflecting price determining characteristics of the item, the terms of the transactions, and services provided by the outlet.

2.4.2 Recording is done on an accrual basis.

Prices are recorded as they are in the period they are purchased or posted.

2.4.3 Grossing/netting procedures are broadly consistent with internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices.

Price data collection is from fixed established outlets/markets which are continuously reviewed or assessed for product availability. Some markets do not have all products and therefore, it is sometimes difficult.

3. Accuracy and Reliability

Accuracy and reliability identify features that contribute to the goal that data portray reality. Elements refer to identified features of the source data, statistical techniques, and supporting assessments and validation.

3.1 Source data — Source data available provide an adequate basis to compile statistics.

3.1.1. Source data are collected from comprehensive data collection programs that take into account country-specific conditions.

CPI data is collected on a monthly basis and published on the 15th of every month for the preceding month. Retail prices of consumer items are collected monthly and items are classified by Classification of Individual Consumption by Purpose (COICOP). Retail prices of consumers compiled are consistent with time of recording and valuation of CPI estimates.

Household surveys for CPI expenditure weights are based on an area sample frame that is current and comprehensive for the scope of the index. Geographical coverage is comprehensive given that data is collected from all the regions of the country. Questionnaires are well designed in consultation with stakeholders and users, and it is tested before application or adoption. Data collection for the CPI is undertaken using tablets. Some markets do not have all products and therefore, it is sometimes difficult. There has never been replacement of outlets / markets in the price data collection as they have been reliable.

No separate data collection/ compilation routines are specifically designed for efficient and accurate price collection. This is not done since new products and development in markets are captured during Integrated household surveys for rebasing CPI for improvement. Monthly verification of price data to ascertain quality and international best practices is done.

3.1.2 Source data reasonably approximate the definitions, scope, sectorization, classifications, valuation, and time of recording required.

The ILO Manual 2004 is followed. No other data source different from the prevailing ones are used.

3.1.3 Source data are timely

Price data collection is done once a month which is adequate to support the publication frequency of the index. Source data which are prices from market outlets are consistent with definitions, scope and classification of CPI estimates. Retail consumer price data is consistent with time of recording and valuation of CPI estimates.

3.2 Assessment of source data — *Source data are regularly assessed*

3.2.1 Source data—including censuses, sample surveys, and administrative records— are routinely assessed, e.g., for coverage, sample error, response error, and non-sampling error; the results of the assessments are monitored and made available to guide statistical processes

Rebasing of CPI is not done regularly i.e. every five years depending on availability of resources to determine changes in consumer purchasing and behaviour as recommended by the ILO. Before the CPI was rebased and published in February 2020, the base year was 2004 which grossly breached international standards.

3.3 Statistical techniques — *Statistical techniques employed conform to sound statistical procedures*

3.3.1 Data compilation employs sound statistical techniques to deal with data sources

Introduction of tablets to minimise data capturing and processing error is implemented. Adjustment to unit values are done upon clear verification from source data provider. Adjustment for non-response or missing items are made appropriately. Missing data is calculated using a well-recognized statistical technique recommended by the CPI manual. Prices of missing products are imputed on a monthly basis using month to month price changes of a higher group. Prices are imputed for seasonal products using the price relative of the sub group in which the items reside. In case where a comparable product is missing from the market, the enumerator chooses a replacement item that can be comparable to the missing item's quality and also the price. Otherwise the overlap method is use to link in the price change. New products that have weights of 0.1% of the total expenditure of goods and services are included in the consumer basket.

3.3.2 Other statistical procedures (e.g., data adjustments and transformations, and statistical analysis) employ sound statistical techniques

Both carli and chained carli are not use in calculating the index for the Gambia. GBoS shifted to using the Jevons to calculate the elementary indices and also use for both homogeneous and heterogeneous items. GBoS is yet to shift to short term modified Laspeyres index: this is being looked at and it will be considered in the near future.

The weight reference period for the current rebased CPI is 2015/2016, while the price reference period is January 2019. The LOWE index is not used, as the expenditure weights

obtained remain constant for all the periods. GBoS uses the Young index to compute the CPI., The expenditure shares obtained from the 2015/2016 Integrated Household Survey (IHS) remain constant for all the periods till the next rebasing. The current rebased CPI basket contains 265 products and services compared to 207 from the August 2004 base, therefore the product list increased by 58 items. The methodology also changed from arithmetic mean to geometric mean while the classification remained the same, that is, COICOP 1999. These changes are all documented in the methodological guide.

3.4 Assessment and validation of intermediate data and statistical outputs — *Intermediate results and statistical outputs are regularly assessed and validated*

3.4.1 Intermediate results are validated against other information where applicable

The comparison of the CPI with other indices is not done although GBoS compiles the Producer Price Index (PPI) as well. This is because, while CPI collects final price paid by consumers, PPI collects factory-gate prices.

3.4.2 Statistical discrepancies in intermediate data are assessed and investigated

Large movements in index of a particular sector are always investigated to ensure accuracy.

3.4.3 Statistical discrepancies and other potential indicators of problems in statistical outputs are investigated

The CPI data is thoroughly reviewed and edited to correct any errors or inconsistencies. Adjustments are undertaken to deal with discrepancies in the data before finalizing.

3.5 Revision studies — *Revisions, as a gauge of reliability, are tracked and mined for the information they may provide*

3.5.1 Studies and analyses of revisions and/or updates are carried out and used internally to inform statistical processes

Substitution bias in the CPI is detected during updating the weights, when consumers change their taste for other goods with low prices. However, this is not fully analyzed. No other studies to investigate bias of CPI is conducted. Documentation on revisions including methods and data sources during rebasing are documented.

4. Serviceability

Serviceability focuses on practical aspects of how well a dataset meet users' needs. Elements refer to the extent to which data are relevant, produced and disseminated in a timely fashion with appropriate periodicity, are consistent internally and with other datasets, and follow a predictable revisions policy.

4.1 Periodicity and timeliness — *Periodicity and timeliness follow internationally accepted dissemination standards*

4.1.1 Periodicity follows dissemination standards

The CPI data are compiled every month in selected centres within the country in accordance with the GDDS and SDDS.

4.1.2 Timeliness follows dissemination standards

The CPI is made available to the public (i.e. policy makers, researchers, and all interested individuals) on the 15th of each month for the preceding month whose information is being disseminated. This also follows GDDS and SDDS standards.

4.2 Consistency — *Statistics are consistent within the dataset, over time, and with major datasets*

4.2.1 Statistics are consistent within the dataset

CPI produced for all classification typologies are consistent within the dataset.

4.2.2 Statistics are consistent or reconcilable over a reasonable period of time

Consistent time series data are available for an adequate period of time. For instance, the rebased 2019 indices have been linked to the 2004 base year data. Also detailed methodological notes identify and explain the main breaks and discontinuities in time series, their causes, as well as adjustments made to maintain consistency over time. However, challenges occur sometimes.

4.2.3 Statistics are consistent or reconcilable with those obtained through other data sources and/or statistical frameworks

The consumer price statistics are largely consistent with other price statistics, especially some portions of the GDP deflator.

4.3 Revision policy and practice — *Data revisions follow a regular and publicized procedure*

4.3.1 Revisions and/or updates follow a regular and transparent schedule

Revisions are recommended in five-year periods for country's like the Gambia. However, household expenditure surveys which are the source of data for updating and revising the basket and item weights are not done regularly. As indicated earlier, the base year was recently changed from 2004 to 2019, a period of 15 years interval. Meanwhile, efforts are being made to conduct Integrated Household Surveys regularly in order to overcome such issues.

5. Accessibility

Accessibility deals with the availability of information to users. Elements refer to the extent to which data and metadata are clear and easily available and to which assistance to the user is adequate to help them find and use the data

5.1 Data accessibility — *Statistics are presented in a clear and understandable manner, forms of dissemination are adequate, and statistics are made available on an impartial basis*

5.1.1

Charts and tables are disseminated with the data to enable users have good picture and understanding of the result.

CPI are published in a clear manner with charts and tables that make the data easily understood by users. Analysis of current developments is included with dissemination to show reasons for movement in prices. CPI is disseminated at detail level with the series from the old 2004 base year.

5.1.2 Dissemination media and format are adequate

CPI is disseminated in a way that facilitates re-dissemination in the media by preparing press briefings including charts. Current statistics and long time series are easily accessible in electronic format from GBoS website. Comprehensive statistics are disseminated both in paper / electronic format on a monthly basis.

The statistics are released according to the preannounced schedule which is the 15th of every month.

5.1.3 Statistics are released on a preannounced schedule

A schedule announces in advance the dates the monthly CPI statistics are to be released.

5.1.4 Statistics are made available to all users at the same time

Users of CPI are informed during meetings and workshops of statistics being released and procedures to access them via website or email or through hard copy based on request. CPI is released to all users on the same day. It is uploaded on GBoS website and shared with to key stakeholders on the same day.

5.1.5 Statistics not routinely disseminated are made available upon request

Statistics that are not routinely published are made available based on request e.g. statistics on prices of individual items of a specific group or category. Customize tabulations are done based on request without a fee. Additional statistics is provided based on request only.

5.2 Metadata accessibility — *Up-to-date and pertinent metadata are made available*

5.2.1 Documentation on concepts, scope, classifications, basis of recording, data sources, and statistical techniques is available, and differences from internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices are annotated

Information on statistics produced are made available and published during rebasing and when updates are done.

Information on methodology and statistical techniques used in computing CPI are adequately documented during rebasing. Metadata, reports and monthly bulletins are made available on the website for consumption of users.

5.3 Assistance to users — *Prompt and knowledgeable support service is available*

5.3.1 Contact points are publicized

All CPI publications clearly indicate contact points / persons for enquiries by mail or telephone.

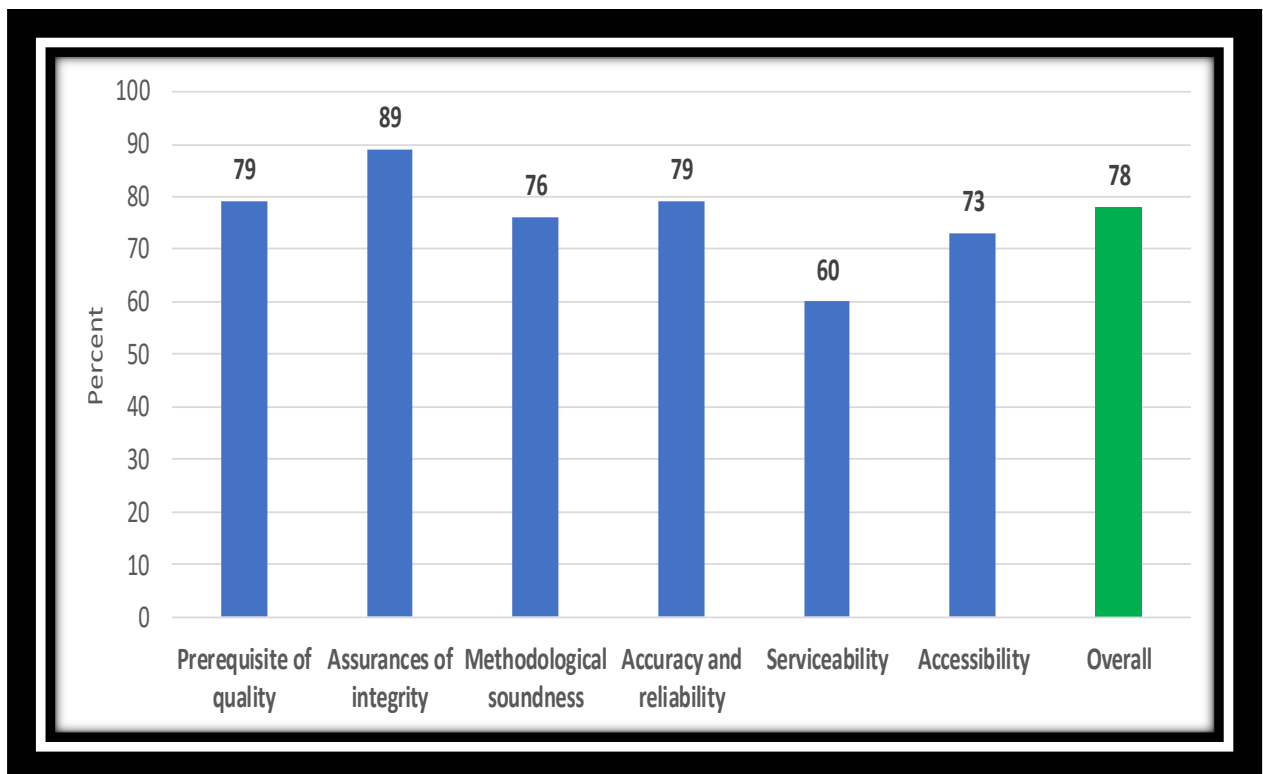
Limited request is made via email as most of the information could be found on the website.

5.3.2 Publications, documents, and other services, including information on any charges, are widely available

Publications, documents and other services to users are available and updated on ad hoc basis

Statistics produced are made available to users at no cost or fee via website, emails, telephone etc.

Figure 2: The Gambia: Level of observance of international principles and good practices in the compilation of CPI using DQAF May 2012



EXTERNAL DEBT STATISTICS

The following detailed information on indicators of statistical practices in the external debt statistics, was gathered from self-assessment using the DQAF tool by the Gambian officials.

0. PREREQUISITES OF QUALITY

This category in the DQAF identifies conditions within the agency in charge of producing statistics that have an impact on data quality. The elements within the category refer to the legal and institutional environment, resources, and quality awareness.

0.1 Legal and institutional environment — *The environment is supportive of statistics.*

0.1.1 The responsibility for collecting, processing, and disseminating the statistics is clearly specified.

The Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs (MoFEA) is required by The Public Finance Act 2014, Part II Section 4, to prepare and publish the annual statistical debt bulletin for public consumption and reporting to the national assembly as well.

The Directorate of Loans and Debt Management (DLDM) is the main unit in the Ministry of Finance and Economics Affair (MoFEA) responsible for debt management. It deals with all aspects of public debt management (both domestic and external) including designing a national public debt strategy, conducting debt sustainability analyses, participation in loan negotiations, approving disbursements, effecting payments of government public debt, maintaining a comprehensive loan-by-loan database on government and government-guaranteed external debt and on external grants to the government.

DLDM serves as the Secretariat to the Aid and Debt Management Coordinating Committee (ADMCC) and coordinates all interaction of the different agencies with respect to debt strategy formulation and implementation.

0.1.2 Data sharing and coordination among data-producing agencies are adequate.

MoFEA receives monthly statement on domestic debt data from the CBG Banking Department and a comprehensive fiscal data on both domestic and external debt service (Interest payment and amortization) from the Finance department of CBG. The Directorate is the Government's main channel of communication with the external creditors and donors with responsibility for interacting with the IMF and World Bank on debt sustainability analyses (DSAs) and debt strategy formulation and implementation. DLDM serves as the Secretariat to the Aid and Debt Management Coordinating Committee (ADMCC) and coordinates all interaction of the different agencies with respect to debt strategy formulation and implementation.

DLDM do have regular meetings with all the stakeholders to inform the data producing agencies to promote a proper understanding of data requirements, to avoid duplication of effort, and to take into account reporting burden.

0.1.3 Individual reporters' data are kept confidential and used for statistical purposes only.

There is no such law for staffs to ensure data confidentiality but there is Personnel Managers Office (PMO) General Order's code of conduct and Public service rules and Regulations which guide staff ethics. The Directorate deals with administrative data, and the data do not bear individual institution names. Access to data is not restricted to staff who require the information in the performance of their statistical duties. Steps are taken to secure the premises of the Directorate and its computer systems to prevent unauthorized access to data. Access to data by the authorized staff is verified by a username and password.

0.1.4 Statistical reporting is ensured through legal mandate and/or measures to encourage response.

The Public Finance Act (2014) Part II Section 4, gives DLDM the mandate to compile and report on the debt profile. The ACT has not prescribed any penalties for non-response. However, there has never been any instance where information or data needed have been refused by data providing agencies.

0.2 Resources — Resources are commensurate with needs of statistical programs.

0.1.1 Staff, facilities, computing resources, and financing are commensurate with statistical programs.

The number of staff is currently inadequate for compilation of the Debt statistics. The statistical unit (back office) in DLDM have only four staff, out of which two are university graduates who have all not had training in statistics. The current staffing assigned for the compilation of Debt services data needs to be increased with respect to the increasing workload in the Directorate.

Staff turnover is high because salaries are not commensurate with the type of work being done at the Directorate and also not competitive with that of other public service organisations.

Sufficient resources are allocated, and best efforts are made to exploit the full potential of the computing technology for compiling and disseminating the statistical series. Every staff of DLDM- back office is assigned a personal laptop, desktop computer with internet access and adequate software such as Excel and the Commonwealth Meridian. Software is periodically updated.

Daily backups are conducted on the system by the Information Technology Department (ITD) of the Ministry. The office building provides adequate working facilities, office furniture and equipment are adequate to perform the required task.

0.1.2 Measures to ensure efficient use of resources are implemented.

There is no staff monitoring tool to check the efficient use of the resources available. However, staff make efficient use of available resources at their disposal. DLMD do have Technical Assistance from IMF, COMSEC etc.

0.2 Relevance — *Statistics cover relevant information on the subject field*

0.3.1 The relevance and practical utility of existing statistics in meeting users' needs are monitored.

There is no formally established process of regular consultation with end user, such as the academia. Debt Management Coordinating Committee (ADMCC) coordinates all interaction of the different agencies with respect to debt strategy formulation and implementation.

The Ministry do participate in statistics meetings organised by AFRITAC, IAOS etc. The Ministry conduct study tour to countries with best practices so as to enhance the quality of work bring it up to standard.

0.3 Other quality management — *Quality is a cornerstone of statistical work*

0.3.1 Processes are in place to focus on quality.

Staff training programs emphasize on quality, but DLDM has not instituted policy on quality. Specific documents or information on commitment to quality are not made available to the general public but upon request.

0.4.2 Processes are in place to monitor quality during the planning and implementation of the statistical program.

Only limited processes are in place to focus on quality. Management may be sensitive to quality dimensions but has not taken sufficient actions to ensure the high quality of Debt statistics being produced. There are no surveys conducted to get feedback from users on quality standards of data produced and on new and emerging data requirements.

1 ASSURANCES OF INTEGRITY

Integrity identifies features that support firm adherence to objectivity in the collection, compilation, and dissemination of statistics in order to maintain users confidence. Elements refer to the professionalism and ethical standards that should guide policies and practices, which should be reinforced by their transparency.

1.1 Institutional Integrity — *Statistical policies and practices are guided by professional principles.*

1.1.1 Statistics are produced on an impartial basis.

Appointments are made in accordance with the General Orders for qualifications for appointments (General Orders of the Personnel Management's Office). Recruitment is based in part on aptitude.

Promotions are largely based on length of service. On-the-job training and seminars are provided to staff on debt management.

1.1.2 Choice of data sources and statistical techniques as well as decisions about dissemination are informed solely by statistical considerations.

Per the functions of the Directorate, there is no option to choose between data sources. The data sources are strictly the CBG and Finance department. DLDM publishes quarterly bulletin on Gambia's debt situation and the decisions on timing and dissemination are informed by statistical considerations.

1.1.3 The appropriate statistical entity is entitled to comment on erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics.

There no policy or procedure established to deal with misinterpretation or misuse of data. However, MoFEA responds to erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics if its attention is drawn to.

1.2 Transparency — Statistical policies and practices are transparent

1.2.1 The terms and conditions under which statistics are collected, processed, and disseminated are available to the public.

The Public Finance Act 2014 is published on the website of MoFEA. Article 51 of the ACT clearly identifies the debt variables that are to be published, but specific timeline for publication is not stated in the ACT. Article 52 of the ACT also mandates MoFEA to prepare annual reports and make it available to the National Assembly. Also, the core mandate of DLDM is available on the website of MoFEA.

1.2.2 Internal governmental access to statistics prior to their release is publicly identified.

Government Ministries, Department and Agencies can request for preliminary data for official use before their release to the public. Apart from the quarterly report which is usually published within three months after the end of each year, and its quarterly Bulletin, there are no other periodic publications by the DLDM, neither are there published release dates. It is common for senior Managers of the MOFEA to quote (in their public speeches) Debt service statistics that are not yet in the public domain.

1.2.3 Products of statistical agencies/units are clearly identified as such.

The Annual Report of the DLDM are clearly identified with the logo. With the Commonwealth Meridian System software that DLDM uses, there is no report you produce without the logo on it. The statistics included in the report that are compiled by other institutions are appropriately identified. Thus, by implication, the public is made aware of which institution has the mandate to compile and disseminate Debt statistics

1.2.4 Advance notice is given of major changes in methodology, source data, and statistical techniques.

No advance notice is given to the public when major changes are introduced in methodology, sources, and statistical techniques. An announcement is made at the time the changes are introduced.

1.3 Ethical standards — *Policies and practices are guided by ethical standards*

1.3.1 Guidelines for staff behaviour are in place and are well known to the staff.

Guidelines for staff behavior are embedded in the General Orders, which concerns the conduct and discipline of public officials. The extent to which these guidelines, including some for maintaining ethical standards (see, for example, Order 03103, which concern data leaks) are known by accountants and data compilers is unclear. New staffs are made aware of the ethical standards when they join the agency but are not afterwards reminded periodically of the standards.

2 Methodological Soundness

Methodological soundness refers to the application of international standards, guidelines, and agreed practices. Application of such standards, which are specific to the dataset, is indicative of the soundness of the data and fosters international comparability. Elements refer to the basic building blocks of concepts and definitions, scope, classification and sectorization, and basis for recording

2.1 Concepts and definitions - *Concepts and definitions used are in accord with internationally accepted statistical frameworks.*

2.1.1 The overall structure in terms of concepts and definitions follows internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices.

The “External Debt Statistics: Guide for Compilers and Users (Guide)” and the sixth version of the Balance of Payments Manual (BPM6) provide the conceptual framework for compiling external debt statistics by DLDM. Thus, External debt data are compiled in accordance with the concepts, definitions and classifications outlined in the Guide and BPM6.

The definition of external debt is based on the notion that if a resident has a current liability to a non-resident that requires payments of principal and/or interest in the future, this liability represents a claim on the resources of the economy of the resident, and so is external debt of that economy.

Interest payments are defined as the interest paid periodically by the debtor to the creditor for the use of the principal; all other payments of economic value that reduce the principal amount outstanding are known as principal repayments.

- Debt service refers to payments in respect of both principal and interest over a period of time.

- Contingent liabilities (implicit and/or explicit) are excluded from the external debt position. Such liabilities are those for which one or more conditions must be fulfilled before the contingency becomes a current liability.

When a resident borrows from a non-resident and on-lends the funds domestically, the resident has an external debt liability to the non-resident and a domestic claim on the resident that received the on-lent funds.

2.2 Scope — *The scope is in accord with internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices*

2.2.1 The scope is broadly consistent with internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices.

The scope of the statistics is broadly consistent with guidelines outlined in the Guide and BPM6. External debt includes all liabilities that are owed to non-residents, and the total amount of such liabilities is presented as the gross external debt position. The gross external debt position of an economy is where the Central Government is centrally involved in external debt borrowing activity, such as a borrower and/or guarantor. The Guide defines gross external debt as a debt at any given time is the outstanding amount of those actual current, and not contingent, liabilities that require payment(s) of principal and/or interest by the debtor at some point(s) in the future and that are owed to non-residents by residents of an economy.

2.3 Classification/sectorization — *Classification and sectorization systems are in accord with internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices.*

2.3.1 Classification/sectorization systems used are broadly consistent with internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices

External debt is classified into four institutional sectors in the Gambia which are as follows: Public and publicly guaranteed debt, Central bank deposits, Loans due to the creditor and the IMF.

2.4 Basis for recording — *Flows and stocks are valued and recorded according to internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices.*

2.4.1 Market prices are used to value flows and stocks.

Consistent with the Guide and the BPM6, market prices of transactions and the nominal values of debt are used. Transactions in foreign currency are converted to local currency using the midpoint exchange rate prevailing in the market at the moment the transactions take place. The market value of a debt security should be determined by its market price

prevailing on the reference date to which the position relates. The market price is also determined by demand and supply.

If the financial markets are closed on the reference date, the market price that should be used is that prevailing on the closest preceding date when the market was open. In some markets the market price quoted for debt securities does not take account of interest that has accrued but is not yet payable (the “clean price”), but in determining market value these interest costs need to be included (the “dirty price”). DLDM normally use the exchange rate provided by CBG on weekly bases.

2.4.2 Recording is done on an accrual basis.

Recording by the treasury, and in the MOFEA annual budget report, are done on a cash basis as well as the Statistical reporting in the CBG Annual Report which is based on modified cash accounting. The authorities are now considering a migration plan to introduce accrual recording of transactions in line with BPM6.

2.4.3 Grossing/netting procedures are broadly consistent with internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices.

Transactions are shown appropriately on a gross netting basis in line with the recommendations of the Guide and BPM6. All external debts are recorded on a gross basis, separate from any related asset components. Defeasance does not affect the outstanding debt of the debtor as long as there has been no change in the legal obligations of the debtor.

3. Accuracy and Reliability

Accuracy and reliability identify features that contribute to the goal that data portray reality. Elements refer to identified features of the source data, statistical techniques, and supporting assessments and validation.

3.1 Source data — Source data available provide an adequate basis to compile statistics.

3.1.1. Source data are collected from comprehensive data collection programs that take into account country-specific conditions.

Data on disbursements on project loans and program grants are compiled from the disbursement advices, the debt services which include the principal and interest payment are also compiled by getting credit advice from the creditor. DLDM normally get the credit advices from the creditor for both the disbursed and debt services payment to ensure that the data adequacy which sometimes have time lag of three months, especially from the Arab creditor. DLDM use the commonwealth debt recording system which is very robust. DLDM operations are limited only to central government, and there are plans to go into the municipal level. At the ministry level there is a committee which meets at the end of every month.

3.1.2 Source data reasonably approximate the definitions, scope, sectorization, classifications, valuation, and time of recording required.

The data sources reasonably approximate the requirements for compiling debt statistics. However, DLDM is currently using a new database which is consistent with the guidelines of the commonwealth standard with assistance from COMSEC.

3.1.3 Source data are timely

The data collection system allows sufficient time to meet the required timeliness for the dissemination of debt statistics. The frequency and timeliness of disseminated data meet the GDDS requirements but we do have time lags of three to four month because of delay of credit advice from the creditors. Sometimes request statements needed from the creditors to aid in reconciliation unduly delay.

3.2 Assessment of source data — *Source data are regularly assessed*

3.2.1 Source data—including censuses, sample surveys, and administrative records— are routinely assessed, e.g., for coverage, sample error, response error, and non-sampling error; the results of the assessments are monitored and made available to guide statistical processes

DLDM deals with only administrative data, using disbursement receipts and credit advices to update the database. DLMD always reconcile data with the creditors to assess the correctness of the debt figures received. However, annual audit reports identify some anomalies that are corrected.

3.3 Statistical techniques — *Statistical techniques employed conform to sound statistical procedures*

3.3.1 Data compilation employs sound statistical techniques to deal with data sources

Data management is driven by the software use for the compilation of debt statistics. So, the software has built-in checks and balances to deal with compilation errors. Therefore, discrepancies identified between monthly data are due to late receipt of the advice from the creditor and later revisions at the end of the year.

3.3.2 Other statistical procedures (e.g., data adjustments and transformations, and statistical analysis) employ sound statistical techniques

The data are compiled using the Guide and BPM6 which give compilation guidelines on adjustment and transformation of data. Where position data are estimated from cumulating transactions data, an attempt is made to revalue the position data to include valuation and other changes. When external debt is contracted by a resident agency and the funds are on-lent to another resident, the agency contracting the debt is recorded as debtor, and not the agency to which these funds are on-lent. When external debt is contracted by a resident agency but funds are disbursed directly by the creditor to a resident project implementing agency, the agency contracting the debt is recorded as debtor and not the project implementing agency. When arrears of principal and/or interest are recorded under short-

term debt, entries are made to avoid double counting by excluding these arrears from the original instrument.

3.4 Assessment and validation of intermediate data and statistical outputs — *Intermediate results and statistical outputs are regularly assessed and validated*

3.4.1 Intermediate results are validated against other information where applicable

Not applicable in the Gambia.

3.4.2 Statistical discrepancies in intermediate data are assessed and investigated

This is always done through checks on disbursements outstanding and the debt services due at the end of the year which reveal the source of the discrepancies. The difference between the beginning and end-period value of external debt data for each liability category is equal to the sum of transactions, exchange rate changes, and other adjustments for that category.

3.4.3 Statistical discrepancies and other potential indicators of problems in statistical outputs are investigated

Coverage of debt securities is compared against the results of the creditor data. The discrepancies are mainly due to failure to update the system with information received.

3.5 Revision studies — *Revisions, as a gauge of reliability, are tracked and mined for the information they may provide*

3.5.1 Studies and analyses of revisions and/or updates are carried out and used internally to inform statistical processes

Revision studies are not done.

4. Serviceability

Serviceability focuses on practical aspects of how well a dataset meet users' needs. Elements refer to the extent to which data are relevant, produced and disseminated in a timely fashion with appropriate periodicity, are consistent internally and with other datasets, and follow a predictable revisions policy.

4.1 Periodicity and timeliness — *Periodicity and timeliness follow internationally accepted dissemination standards*

4.1.1 Periodicity follows dissemination standards

The quarterly debt service statistical bulletin meets the General Data Dissemination Standards (GDDS) on periodicity. Quarterly external debt position data, broken down by four institutional sectors (general government, monetary authorities, banks, and other sectors) are disseminated. Data are disaggregated by maturity (short- and long-term) and provided on an original maturity basis and by type of instrument, as set out in BPM6.

Public and publicly guaranteed external debt data, broken down by maturity, are disseminated quarterly and the associated public and publicly guaranteed external debt service schedules are disseminated twice yearly with data for four quarters and two semesters ahead.

4.1.2 Timeliness follows dissemination standards

SDDS - Quarterly external debt position data are disseminated within one quarter after the reference date

GDDS - Quarterly public and publicly guaranteed external debt data are disseminated within one to two quarters after the reference date and the associated public and publicly guaranteed external debt service schedules are disseminated within three to six months after the reference period.

4.2 Consistency — *Statistics are consistent within the dataset, over time, and with major datasets*

4.2.1 Statistics are consistent within the dataset

External debt position data are consistent with the corresponding external debt transactions data. Liabilities components of balance of payments are consistent with the corresponding external debt position data. Differences identified are reconciled.

4.2.2 Statistics are consistent or reconcilable over a reasonable period of time

Quarterly data are consistent with annual data and reconcilable over a reasonable period of time.

4.2.3 Statistics are consistent or reconcilable with those obtained through other data sources and/or statistical frameworks

External debt position data are consistent with Related national accounts statistics (both stocks and flows); external debt data included with in the IIP while related transactions recorded in the balance of payments. Public external debt data are consistent with related government finance statistics (both stocks and flows). The banking sector and central bank liabilities in the external debt statistics are largely consistent with monetary and financial statistics.

4.3 Revision policy and practice — *Data revisions follow a regular and publicized procedure*

4.3.1 Revisions and/or updates follow a regular and transparent schedule

Do not have a revision cycle

4.3.2 Preliminary and/or revised /updated data are clearly identified

At the time of data dissemination, users are informed whenever data are preliminary. At the time of data dissemination, users are informed whenever data are.

4.3.3 Studies and analyses of revisions are made public

Reclassifications of external debt by institutional sector due to changes in the debtor resulting from debt relief are clearly identified and published.

5 Accessibility

Accessibility deals with the availability of information to users. Elements refer to the extent to which data and metadata are clear and easily available and to which assistance to the user is adequate to help them find and use the data

5.1 Data accessibility — Statistics are presented in a clear and understandable manner, forms of dissemination are adequate, and statistics are made available on an impartial basis

5.1.1 Statistics are presented in a way that facilitates proper interpretation and meaningful comparisons (layout and clarity of text, tables, and charts)

The external debt statistics are disseminated according to the classifications recommended by the Guide and BPM6, and in time series form. The report contains trend analysis, charts and tables that facilitate proper interpretation of the data.

5.1.2 Dissemination media and format are adequate

Statistics are disseminated in ways that facilitate re-dissemination in the media. Quarterly report on external debt positions data is in conformity with the World Bank and IMF standards on Public Sector Debt. Dissemination is timely and in standard formats of public sector debt data. The principal aim of the database is to support macroeconomic analysis and cross-country comparison of public sector debt by bringing such data and metadata together in one central location. In addition, the PSD supports countries' efforts toward improving the institutional and instrument coverage, as well as the general availability, of public sector debt data.

5.1.3 Statistics are released on a preannounced schedule

There is no preannounced release schedule. Stakeholders are informed when data are going to be released.

5.1.4 Statistics are made available to all users at the same time

As stated earlier, external debt data are made available internally for official use before disseminating to the public. However, when they are made public they are available for anyone to access it, and also to anyone upon request.

5.1.5 Statistics not routinely disseminated are made available upon request

Statistics not disseminated are made available upon request, subject to the confidentiality of individual data. Customized tabulations can be provided to meet specific requests.

5.2 Metadata accessibility — Up-to-date and pertinent metadata are made available

5.2.1 Documentation on concepts, scope, classifications, basis of recording, data sources, and statistical techniques is available, and differences from internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices are annotated

As part of the dissemination process, the concepts, definitions, classifications, and methodology used are documented and disseminated in publication form, at regular intervals. This metadata conforms to internationally accepted standards. The metadata is readily accessible on the Ministry website free of charge.

5.2.2 Levels of detail are adapted to the needs of the intended audience

No effort is made to adapt the metadata to the needs of users.

5.2 Assistance to users — Prompt and knowledgeable support service is available

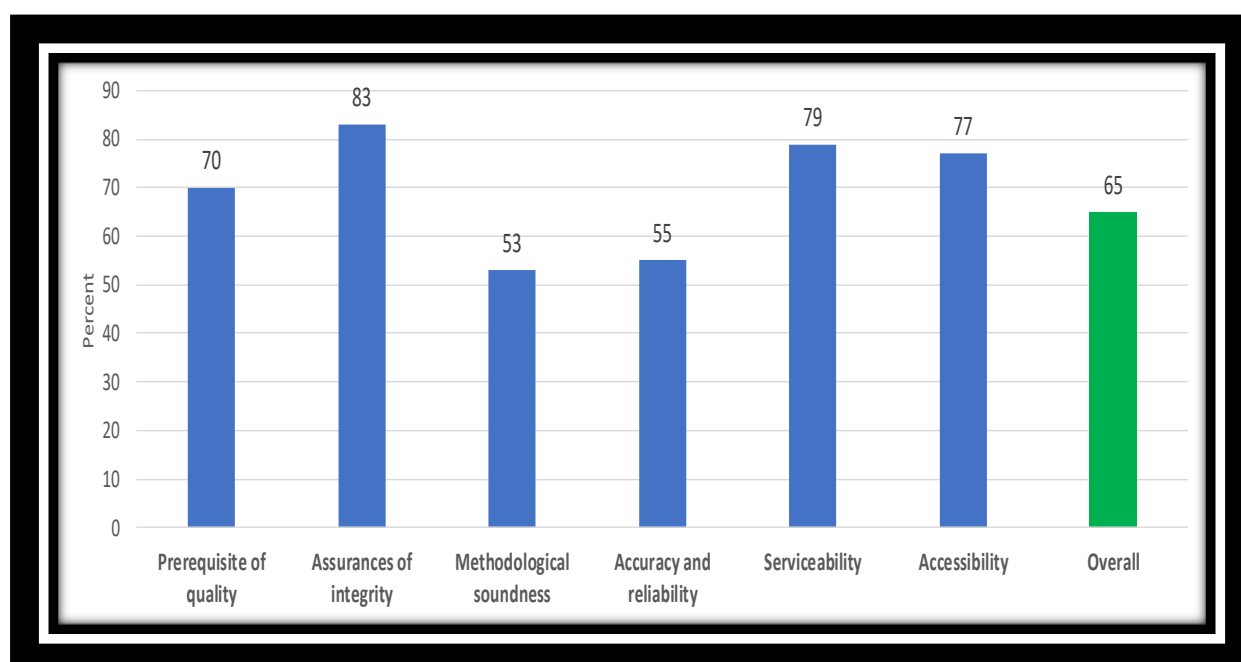
5.3.1 Contact points are publicized

Any data output or statistical released from DLDM are with identity Logo contacts points for enquiries by email, Office Address and telephones. However, it is usually published on the Ministry website for any data users It well explicit and details on website but not advertised and also there are swift response to e-mail data request. The GDDS metadata include information on a contact person, address, telephone, and for central government operations, a fax and an e-mail.

5.3.2 Publications, documents, and other services, including information on any charges, are widely available

The quarterly Statistical Debt Bulletin is published on the Ministry of Finance website and also available upon request. It is downloaded free of charge.

Figure 3: The Gambia: Level of observance of international principles and good practices in the compilation of external debt statistics using DQAF September 2013



EDUCATION STATISTICS

The following detailed information on indicators of statistical practices in the compilation and dissemination of basic education statistics, was gathered from self-assessment using the DQAF tool by the Gambian officials.

0. PREREQUISITES OF QUALITY

This category in the DQAF identifies conditions within the agency in charge of producing statistics that have an impact on data quality. The elements within the category refer to the legal and institutional environment, resources, and quality awareness.

0.1 Legal and institutional environment — *The environment is supportive of statistics.*

0.1.1 The responsibility for collecting, processing, and disseminating the statistics is clearly specified.

The Gambia 1992, and Education Act 2009, mandates the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (MoBSE) and Ministry of Higher Education Research Science and Technology (MoHERST) to collect data from their respective education sub-sector institutions. The Education Sector Policy 2016 -2030 reinforces this mandate with sections 8.3 and 8.12 directing that both MoBSE and MoHERST should collect and produce statistics on all educational institutions be it private or public for a one integrated Education Management Information System (EMIS). These laws and provisions allow the two ministries to access all basic administrative data for statistical purposes. The review found out that even though there is a policy statement on EMIS, there is no EMIS policy to date in The Gambia.

0.1.2 Data sharing and coordination among data-producing agencies are adequate.

MoBSE has a well-coordinated data sharing and coordination system. Despite the need to further strengthen accuracy as well as the frequency of updating the data at the various levels, the system can highly be relied on as a data source for the EMIS requirements. Data coordination exists at the following levels:

School level: Record keeping at school level is a fundamental requirement for meeting the sectoral minimum standards for all schools. Managers at school level ensure that proper statistical data on enrolment details of pupils by class and grade, individual staff details, school infrastructure and equipment, are filed for reference by relevant authorities. The data is meant to be utilized at school level for the day to day administrative undertakings of school management.

Cluster level: The cluster level which can be composed of up to ten schools, the various data sets kept by individual schools are verified and collected for the purpose of establishing a cluster database on all variables.

Regional level: The establishment of a regional statistical database is heavily dependent on the data on all schools from all the clusters in the region. For the purpose of accuracy, the regional education directorates further verify the data collected and submitted by the

Cluster Monitors to the Regional Planning focal point. As a result, a reliable regional statistical database is established in all the regions for utilization in the administrative activities of the regional managers.

Head – Quarters: At Head Quarters, the Directorate of Planning, Policy Analysis and Research, is the institutional home of the EMIS. Using specifically designed data collection questionnaires for acquiring and processing education statistics underpinned by national and regional quality standards that are subjected to audits and compliance monitoring along the statistical value chain, the Directorate conducts an annual nation-wide data collection exercise on all institutions. For the purpose of accuracy and successfully completing the questionnaire, an accompanying completion guideline on which one day training and orientation is conducted is attached to the questionnaire.

0.1.3 Individual reporters' data are kept confidential and used for statistical purposes only.

MoBSE/EMIS strategy does not provide guideline or protocol regarding the accessing of information by external users. However internal checks such as written request to the Permanent Secretary is required to safeguard individual data confidentiality.

0.1.4 Statistical reporting is ensured through legal mandate and/or measures to encourage response.

The Education Act 2009 mandates MoBSE to disseminate education statistics, the Ministry keep records of key data users which includes all government line Ministry, Agencies and Department. Annual Statistical publication, reports and feedback are shared with all stakeholders at regional level during the Coordinating Committee Meeting.

0.2 Resources — Resources are commensurate with needs of statistical programs.

0.2.1 Staff, facilities, computing resources, and financing are commensurate with statistical programs.

Allocation is provided in the national budget for the production of education statistics. The allocated amount only covers key EMIS activities such as data collection on students, teachers, facilities and instructional materials, data capture, production and publication of statistical reports.

Most of the staff working in the statistics unit have the academic or professional qualifications according to their job descriptions. However, there is the need to recruit staff with specialized skills and competences in the statistics unit, for example, education statisticians, financial and data analysts.

The Ministry has a general strategy that promotes and implements regular professional development. However, there is no specific professional development strategy for the statistics unit and no strategy to retain key EMIS specialist skills. Very few Staff in the

statistics unit have the privilege to attend regional or international conferences on educational statistics.

There is ICT infrastructure and equipment for the statistics unit, and at all key posts and administrative tiers but it is not sufficient.

0.2.2 Measures to ensure efficient use of resources are implemented.

The required trained personnel with technical knowhow are needed to train staff on how to make good use of the equipment available.

0.3 Relevance — *Statistics cover relevant information on the subject field*

0.3.1 The relevance and practical utility of existing statistics in meeting users' needs are monitored.

Data relevance and effectiveness has been recognized as a powerful tool to regulate, plan and shape the advancement of education. In the Gambia, the demand for educational data is coming from stakeholders that have keen interest on specific issues in education. This ranges from the level of students, school level, regional level and national level. The users of educational data are mainly categorized below:

Parents: They are mostly interested in students' learning outcomes: students' performance data, resource allocation of school.

Other stakeholders: These are education stakeholders such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), bilateral and multilateral partners. They are mainly interested in trends, standardized indicators, regional comparison, efficiency, resource allocation (Education for All (EFA) targets indicators, gender parity index)

Government: The government is mainly concerned with development-related indicators and projections for better planning and data related to the fulfilment of sub-regional, regional and international commitments (EFA goals, ...), (access to school, promotion rates, ...)

Students: They require data to determine personal progress and performance.

The general public: Request both resource allocation and performance indicators.

0.4 Other quality management — *Quality is a cornerstone of statistical work*

0.4.1 Processes are in place to focus on quality.

There is a considerable amount of knowledge and capacity at the management level and EMIS staff toward upholding quality commitment at all administrative data compilation levels. All the processes necessary to address quality Education management and statistics production are in place. Planning focal points and cluster monitors are trained as trainers on how to collect quality data and this is filtered down to the Head Teachers/Masters of schools

0.4.2 Processes are in place to monitor quality during the planning and implementation of the statistical program.

There exist mechanisms handled by experts with a technical adviser who set quality standards for implementation of all activities in the EMIS. At the level of the school head, data is validated and authenticated by the school stamp. Cluster monitors then do their

quality checks to see that all the data gaps are filled before the data is accepted. Other checks are done by planning focal points. All these are to ensure that the final data that reach the headquarters meet the quality desired.

1 ASSURANCES OF INTEGRITY

Integrity identifies features that support firm adherence to objectivity in the collection, compilation, and dissemination of statistics in order to maintain users' confidence. Elements refer to the professionalism and ethical standards that should guide policies and practices, which should be reinforced by their transparency.

1.2 Institutional Integrity — *Statistical policies and practices are guided by professional principles.*

1.2.1 *Statistics are produced on an impartial basis.*

The Education Act of 2009 gives independence to MoBSE. For the compilation of education statistics, EMIS is recognized as the responsible body and it is seen as independent. The compilation of education statistics is based on scientific and statistical consideration, and only collected questionnaires from the schools are vetted manually and later entered into the EMIS software application used for data entry. This software was locally developed through the help of international consultants. Post verification are usually undertaken by the regional planners in each of the regions where doubt exists on information provided.

The statistics units take note of errors detected and sometimes these errors when corrected are published publicly. The last time errors were corrected and published was in 2009. If errors are detected they are corrected before being presented to the Coordinating Committee Meeting (CCM).

1.2.2 *Choice of data sources and statistical techniques as well as decisions about dissemination are informed solely by statistical considerations.*

Annual statistical publication (yearbook) and other reports generated by MoBSE document procedures with definition of key indicators, and statistical methodology applied in the statistical data production. These released statistics are made in an impartial and objective manner and on a non-partisan basis. Most of the data published on basic and secondary education are done in a public forum where all stakeholders are present.

1.2.3 *The appropriate statistical entity is entitled to comment on erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics.*

The statistics unit under MoBSE is entitled to comment on erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics produced, as it is the body responsible of Basic and Secondary Education.

1.2 Transparency — *Statistical policies and practices are transparent*

1.2.1 The terms and conditions under which statistics are collected, processed, and disseminated are available to the public.

The Education Sector Policy 2016-2030 mandates the Planning Directorate to collect, compile, analyse and disseminate education statistics, and also analysis and evaluation of recurrent and development expenditures from both government and external sources. EMIS will continue to be accorded a priority status in the quest for an effective tool in the rational planning of the education system. So, this terms and condition are very clear to all education stakeholders.

1.2.3 Products of statistical agencies/units are clearly identified as such.

All publications on education statistics clearly show EMIS and other units as the source of the information.

1.2.4 Advance notice is given of major changes in methodology, source data, and statistical techniques.

EMIS in collaboration with the Ministry notify all the unit heads, Director of Directorates, stakeholders both local and international if there are any major change in the methodology, indicator or any statistical techniques. There exist many platforms of interaction with our stakeholders including the website and the bimonthly Committee Coordinating Meeting (CCM).

1.3 Ethical standards — Policies and practices are guided by ethical standards

1.3.1 Guidelines for staff behaviour are in place and are well known to the staff.

Clear guidelines outlining correct staff behaviour exist, in mainly the Civil Service Code of conduct which is given to each civil servant. MoBSE, like any other government entity is guided by this provision. Section 46 of the General Orders deals with staff professional and ethical conduct. It is stipulated in appointment letters of all civil servants. These guidelines, are however, not focused on statistics and tend to be a general one.

2 Methodological Soundness

Methodological soundness refers to the application of international standards, guidelines, and agreed practices. Application of such standards, which are specific to the dataset, is indicative of the soundness of the data and fosters international comparability. Elements refer to the basic building blocks of concepts and definitions, scope, classification and sectorization, and basis for recording

2.2 Concepts and definitions - Concepts and definitions used are in accord with internationally accepted statistical frameworks.

2.1.1 The overall structure in terms of concepts and definitions follows internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices.

MoBSE, specifically the EMIS Unit, exhibits a high degree of understanding and appreciation of sound methodological and statistical procedures. EMIS received the support from international consultants who helped the EMIS unit to put in place all the necessary processes and standards regarding concepts, data processing and publication of educational statistics on basic and secondary education.

Definition of standard concepts and terms are documented and available for use; most of the documents have defined standard concepts at the basic education level. The Gambia has EMIS operations Manual with the definition of the important concept. This manual need to be updated in line with the new EMIS Plan. Also, in the yearbook, the concepts are well documented.

MoBSE pre-tests all data collection tools, data entry forms and database structures before use. Data verification and validation processes are systematically implemented at every stage of the statistical value chain.

Survey designs sometimes are done only by the ministry staff without the involvement of other education stakeholders. It should be an inclusive process and hence there is need to improve on the process.

Ministries have the standardized questionnaires for both formal and non-formal education. This is a good standard operating procedure and conforms to best practice. Harmonization of school records are compatible with school census.

2.2 Scope — *The scope is in accord with internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices*

2.2.1 *The scope is broadly consistent with internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices.*

Education statistics has a nationwide coverage with disaggregation by Region (LGA), District and at National level. Education School/Institutions are classified as Public and Private. Teachers and Students are disaggregated by gender.

2.3 Classification/sectorization — *Classification and sectorization systems are in accord with internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices.*

2.3.1 *Classification/sectorization systems used are broadly consistent with internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices.*

Classification and sectorization largely conforms the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) 1997 version. Education School/Institutions are classified as Public and Private. Teachers and Students are disaggregated by gender (M -- Male and F -- Female)

3. Accuracy and Reliability

Accuracy and reliability identify features that contribute to the goal that data portray reality. Elements refer to identified features of the source data, statistical techniques, and supporting assessments and validation.

3.1 Source data — Source data available provide an adequate basis to compile statistics.

3.1.1. Source data are collected from comprehensive data collection programs that take into account country-specific conditions.

MoBSE has a comprehensive and updated list for both private and public schools from ECD, Lower Basic, Upper Basic and Senior Secondary School and Non-Formal Education. The Annual School Census reported by MoBSE records a response rate of over 99% for both public and private schools and the statistics are consistent and can be compared with other sources of data such as the household survey.

3.1.2 Source data reasonably approximate the definitions, scope, sectorization, classifications, valuation, and time of recording required.

Under the guidance of international standards and best practices the schools are classified by public and private. Locally the schools are classified as Government, Grant-aided School which are government subvented schools, Private Madrassah and private convention schools. Public schools are classified Government and Grant-Aided, and private are Private convention and Private Madrassah.

3.1.3 Source data are timely

MoBSE has a statistics strategy which guides the frequency of the data collected with clear timelines for all the activities. Timelines are strictly adhered to so there are no delays. MoBSE always release the draft report in February of every year. These provisional figures are reported at the regional CCM. At the CCM all Education stakeholders are represented, therefore the report is widely disseminated.

3.2 Assessment of source data — Source data are regularly assessed

3.2.1 Source data—including censuses, sample surveys, and administrative records— are routinely assessed, e.g., for coverage, sample error, response error, and non-sampling error; the results of the assessments are monitored and made available to guide statistical processes

Templates are developed to monitor coverage in any census before data are entered and the response rates are more than 98%. Mechanisms are in place to follow the last 2% of our respondents, by calling etc. If any sample error, response error, and non-sampling error are detected, they are quickly checked and corrected.

3.3 Statistical techniques — Statistical techniques employed conform to sound statistical procedures

3.3.1 Data compilation employs sound statistical techniques to deal with data sources

The system used at the EMIS Unit provides functionalities to avoid data capture errors. The items in the questionnaire have quality controls incorporated in the software. Final quality checks in terms of trend and other consistency checks take place, and after this, final draft is released for validation by the statistician and core EMIS staff.

3.3.2 Other statistical procedures (e.g., data adjustments and transformations, and statistical analysis) employ sound statistical techniques

Statistical procedures in terms of data adjustment, transformation and analysis is based on best practices. There is a UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) adviser who is called in when needed and the skills employed in solving problems filter down to core EMIS staff. In the EMIS, any activity conducted is in line with sound statistical techniques.

3.4 Assessment and validation of intermediate data and statistical outputs — *Intermediate results and statistical outputs are regularly assessed and validated*

3.4.1 Intermediate results are validated against other information where applicable

Year-to-year changes and trends are examined. When other educational data from household surveys conducted by GBOS are available, the EMIS data is validated against.

3.4.2 Statistical discrepancies in intermediate data are assessed and investigated

In case there exist any discrepancies in intermediate data, investigation is done to ascertain possible source of the discrepancy. Follow-ups with the schools are sometimes made.

3.5 Revision studies — *Revisions, as a gauge of reliability, are tracked and mined for the information they may provide*

3.5.1 Studies and analyses of revisions and/or updates are carried out and used internally to inform statistical processes

The EMIS data is thoroughly checked and trend analysis conducted. At the CCM, any findings from in-house studies are duly communicated.

4. Serviceability

Serviceability focuses on practical aspects of how well a dataset meet users' needs. Elements refer to the extent to which data are relevant, produced and disseminated in a timely fashion with appropriate periodicity, are consistent internally and with other datasets, and follow a predictable revisions policy.

4.1 Periodicity and timeliness — *Periodicity and timeliness follow internationally accepted dissemination standards*

4.1.1 Periodicity follows dissemination standards

The dissemination period has been reduced from May to March since 2018.

4.1.2 Timeliness follows dissemination standards

Education statistics are reported and disseminated always on time.

4.2 Consistency — *Statistics are consistent within the dataset, over time, and with major datasets*

4.2.1 Statistics are consistent within the dataset

To ensure data consistency, the MoBSE has provided specific guidelines and checks to the cluster centres and inspection circuits. The database content is consistent and quality control is done to ensure correct information.

4.2.2 Statistics are consistent or reconcilable over a reasonable period of time

The consistency of the statistics is verified often, periodically annual school census is conducted in comparison with base statistics, including missing data. There are minimal errors and errors are published if they exist.

4.2.3 Statistics are consistent or reconcilable with those obtained through other data sources and/or statistical frameworks

Since sample surveys usually have some level of sampling errors, differences between enrolment rates and other indicators between GBoS household survey results and EMIS data exist.

5. Accessibility

Accessibility deals with the availability of information to users. Elements refer to the extent to which data and metadata are clear and easily available and to which assistance to the user is adequate to help them find and use the data

5.1 Data accessibility — *Statistics are presented in a clear and understandable manner, forms of dissemination are adequate, and statistics are made available on an impartial basis*

5.1.1 Statistics are presented in a way that facilitates proper interpretation and meaningful comparisons (layout and clarity of text, tables, and charts)

Education Statistics are analysed and presented in a form that facilitates proper interpretation and meaningful comparisons. The texts are clear with very easy and presentable charts where required.

5.1.2 Dissemination media and format are adequate.

Data are disseminated through stakeholder meetings, the Ministry's website and printed hardcopy.

5.1.3 Statistics are released on a preannounced schedule.

There are no specific preannounced schedules for statistical releases.

5.1.4 Statistics are made available to all users at the same time

MoBSE disseminates the education statistics at the CCM where all education stakeholders are invited. After all necessary changes have been accepted at this level, the yearbook is uploaded for public access and consumption. Therefore, it cannot be said that the information is made available to all users at the same time.

5.1.5 Statistics not routinely disseminated are made available upon request

Statistics not disseminated are made available upon request but anonymized if need be.

5.2 Metadata accessibility — *Up-to-date and pertinent metadata are made available*

5.2.1 Documentation on concepts, scope, classifications, basis of recording, data sources, and statistical techniques is available, and differences from internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices are annotated

There is no formal documentation on statistical processes.

5.2.2 Levels of detail are adapted to the needs of the intended audience

Statistics are reported on all sub-sectors of education and training and are very comprehensive.

5.3 Assistance to users — *Prompt and knowledgeable support service is available*

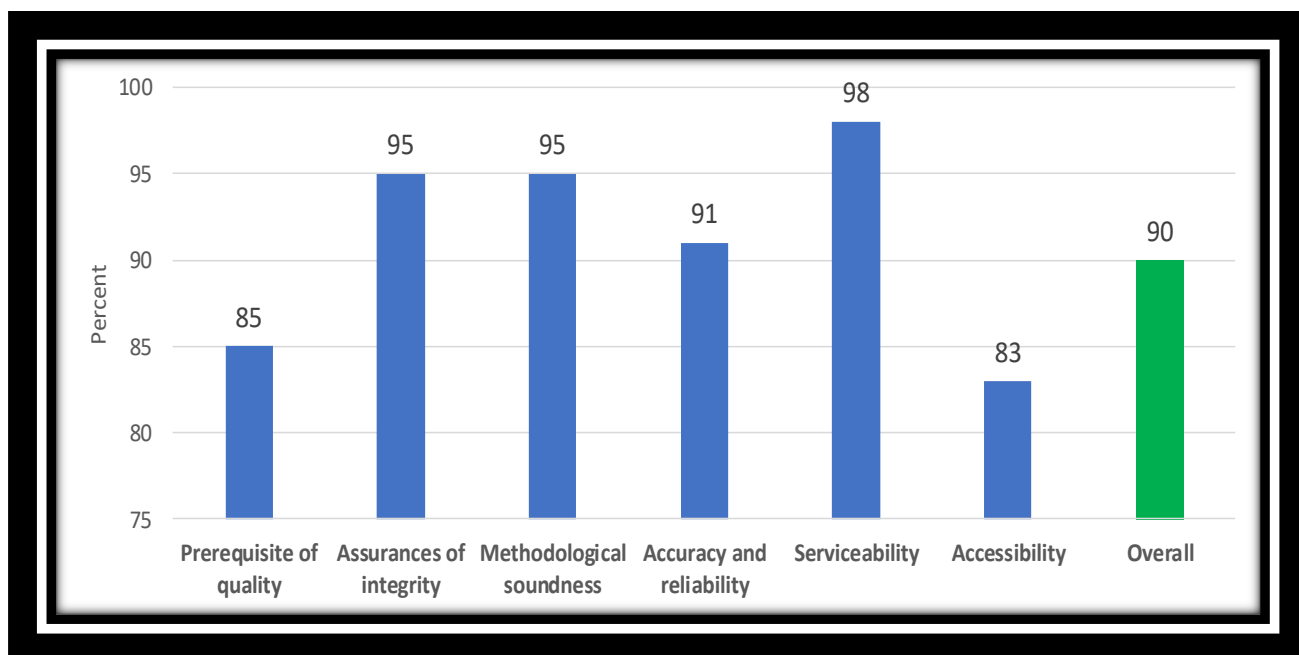
5.3.1 Contact points are publicized

There exist EMIS head and system analyst in which all data requests are address to.

5.3.2 Publications, documents, and other services, including information on any charges, are widely available

There exists a website where all statistical reports and publications are made available for public consumption.

Figure 4: The Gambia: Level of observance of international principles and good practices in the compilation of basic education statistics using DQAF January 2003



SAMPLE SURVEY

The following detailed information on indicators of statistical practices in the conduct of surveys, was gathered from self-assessment using the hybrid DQAF tool and the customized US Standards and Guidelines for Statistical Surveys by the GBoS officials.

0. PREREQUISITES OF QUALITY

This category in the DQAF identifies conditions within the agency in charge of producing statistics that have an impact on data quality. The elements within the category refer to the legal and institutional environment, resources, and quality awareness.

0.1 Legal and institutional environment — *The environment is supportive of statistics.*

0.1.1 The responsibility for collecting, processing, and disseminating the statistics is clearly specified.

The Statistics Act 2005, which has been revised and designated as Statistics Act 2019 mandates The Gambia Bureau of Statistics (GBoS) as the authority for collecting, analysing and disseminating official statistics, conducting population and housing censuses and ad hoc surveys in The Gambia. Further, it empowers GBoS to coordinate and monitor the National Statistical System (NSS) to ensure sustainability in the production of credible data. The Statistics Act is superior to any other Act in the NSS for statistical activities in the country. This means that other producers of official statistics are professionally independent but they cannot be assigned responsibilities that are in contradiction with the provisions and principles of the Statistics Act 2005. Previously, there were minor contradictions in terms of which institutions are supposed to compute which indicators. Such problems are not uncommon in the NSS but overall, they have been resolved professionally.

0.1.2 Data sharing and coordination among data-producing agencies are adequate.

On annual basis, the Conference of Official Statistics or the African Statistics Day is held during which all the producers of statistics (Ministries, Departments and Agencies) meet to discuss issues, challenges, developments, and achievements in the production of statistics in the country. Some of the key issues discussed during the event are; how to harmonize statistics, coordination of data production processes to avoid duplication of both efforts and resources. In spite of this, however, there is a need for a better coordination strategy to strengthen the inter-institutional cooperation on statistical activities in order to achieve consistency and efficiency in the NSS.

0.1.3 Individual reporters' data are kept confidential and used for statistical purposes only.

Article 25 of the Statistics Act, 2005 provides for confidentiality and disclosure of statistical information while Article 37 enjoins staff of GBoS to swear the Oath of Confidentiality before assumption of duty. This is also spelt out in the revised Statistics Bill 2019 in Articles 18, 19 and 22. While the Statistics Act, 2005 gives room to use individual data for criminal prosecution, the revised Statistics Act 2019, states that individual data shall not be used for

any investigation, surveillance, legal proceedings, administrative decision-making or other similar handling of matters concerning a natural or a legal person by any authorities or international organizations. Furthermore, respondents are assured of the confidentiality of their responses through the consent form which is always placed in front page of data collection instruments and read to them. In addition to the confidentiality, the purpose of the data collection, and of the entire voluntary decision to participate in the Survey are read to the respondents by the interviewers before commencement of data collection. Any staff of the Bureau who contravenes the confidentiality clauses commits an offence is punishable.

Individual data are aggregated and thorough checks are done before dissemination is carried out to ensure confidentiality is maintained. The Directorate of Coordination, Methods, Quality Assurance and Dissemination has responsibility for these procedures. Electronically, appropriate procedures are employed to secure individual data through anonymization. For hardcopies that need to be destroyed, appropriate measures are taken to avert leakage of confidential information. The work environment of GBoS is well secured and its computer systems are properly protected to ensure that individual data are not compromised.

0.1.4 Statistical reporting is ensured through legal mandate and/or measures to encourage response.

The Statistics Act 2005 mandates GBoS to collect data from individuals, businesses and Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) while at the same time enjoins these entities to work closely and supply GBoS with relevant data necessary for the compilation of official statistics. Over the years, GBoS has enjoyed collaboration with institutions in the NSS in the area of statistical reporting. For example, the compilation of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and trade statistics require data from multi-sectoral sources and the response has been encouraging.

Although the Statistics Act, 2005 prescribes penalties for refusal to give data to GBoS the provision has not been enforced partly because the Bureau usually adhere to the principle of non-coercion in its data collection approach. It rather encourages respondents to freely supply information. Respondent burden could be a challenge which may sometimes result in noncompliance. However, surveys conducted are few and far between because the subvention from the government is not adequate for statistical activities. Surveys are conducted only when donor funding is secured. GBoS always provides support to respondents to complete forms or to respond to interviewers in the case of face-to-face interviews. In the event that respondents could not respond to questionnaires because of some busy schedules, contacts are exchanged and the interviews rescheduled to a time convenient to the respondent. Call backs are made at the appointed time to collect the required information. Electronically, questionnaires and relevant explanatory materials are sent to the emails of targeted respondents. This affords them time to complete the tool at their convenience but within the regulatory period for the survey. Data suppliers are extremely important and this is highly recognised by GBoS. Therefore, the Bureau, through its advocacy programmes sensitize respondents about the importance of quality data for nation building and the need for them to provide accurate data. Their concerns are also

noted and addressed by the Bureau to ensure their continuous participation in GBoS studies.

0.2 Resources — *Resources are commensurate with needs of statistical programs.*

0.2.1 Staff, facilities, computing resources, and financing are commensurate with statistical programs.

Sustainable human resources are essential to respond to increasing and changing statistical requirements at the Bureau. Statistical methodologies, some of which are extremely complex, require considerable expertise. There are still not enough human resources for performing some of the statistical activities. The capacity building and training needs assessments was carried out in 2015 and the report indicated the need for comprehensive human resources development in GBoS in order to efficiently produce and disseminate required statistics. The report indicated that some of the staff are statistically skilful and have acquired relevant qualifications and trainings. However, capacity gaps still exist in many areas for other staff. Overall, a core staff with adequate training is maintained and staff turnover is manageable. Compared to other government institutions in the country, salary for staff at GBoS is reasonably competitive and attractive. However, some staff also have been attracted by higher salaries in other institutions and therefore left.

The Bureau is operating under limited and inadequate resources. The computer infrastructure which is extremely important in carrying out an overall statistical process is not enough. The website maintenance and license of advanced statistical tools are expensive to procure. For example, the Tableau software is an important tool for data visualization and dissemination but acquisition of its license is expensive. The current available software in the Bureau are effective and are periodically updated when required. Other complimentary devices are not in adequate supply. Printers for example, are not enough for most of the work. However, proper management and maximum utilization of existing ones could complete the task. The Bureau is lacking proper and effective back-up systems for ensuring maximum data security and retrieval process in the event of any natural disaster. As it stands, there is a great threat of losing data in the event of a natural disaster and recovering could be irrevocable. Datasets are often on the laptops of some relevant staff but the provision of a centralized back-up infrastructure is essential.

For now, office infrastructure is enough for current working environment. However, it was recommended in the capacity building and training needs assessments that the Bureau should have a Statistical Training Centre (STC) for conducting statistical training for staff and the NSS. For this, there are not enough space to house such an infrastructure at GBoS. The office equipment and furniture are adequately procured for all offices. The Procurement unit under the Directorate of Administration and Human Resources is responsible for supplies. Logistically, enough transportation is always provided for data collection exercises irrespective of the duration. Other vehicles are planned to remain at the office to carry out other official functions during data collection period.

As already mentioned, enough funding of statistical activities has been a problem for the Bureau. Funding is often secured for some programmes. Other statistical programmes that

needs to be carried out as specified in the NSDS are not implemented due to inadequate resources. Proper budgeting procedures are in place for all activities. In addition, an overall budget of a five-year statistical activities for the National Statistical System (NSS) is provided in the NSDS II. The funding horizon is amenable as in the NSDS. There are concerns for donor fatigue as the government subventions are not enough for statistical activities in the NSS.

0.2.2 Measures to ensure efficient use of resources are implemented.

Annually, every staff of GBoS is issued a Performance Management System (PMS) that measures the performance of the staff. This is issued by the Directorate of Administration and Human Resources. The staff are to report all the activities they have carried out as in their respective job Terms of References (TORs). The PMS is to be approved by respective Line Managers before onward submission to Statistics Council (governing body) for review and necessary action. Staff promotion and demotion are based on the performance measure collected from these forms. Due to lack of skilled staff in specific statistical activities, experts from outside are often recruited as a stop-gap measure.

Consultants also have been hired by donor agencies as part of their effort in supporting statistical development in the country. Periodic reviews for statistical activities, including costings, are carried out as part of the overall monitoring system to ensure that resources are wisely utilized. Reviewing and comparing resources periodically for survey series are carried out and duplication in terms of statistical outputs are checked. Budgeting procedures are always in place to effectively allocate resources.

0.3 Relevance — *Statistics cover relevant information on the subject field*

0.3.1 The relevance and practical utility of existing statistics in meeting users' needs are monitored.

During seminars, workshops and meetings, users are informed on specific aspects of current data. More importantly, users are also informed through press conference, print media, radio and television on specific aspects. One major annual event that brings together users and key stakeholders in the NSS to discuss and review existing statistics and new developments is the Conference of Official Statistics. This event, organized on annual basis, allows users, planners, academia etc. to review and identify issues regarding statistical production and utilization in the NSS. Recommendations documented during such events inform strategic decisions when formulating annual work plans. Statistical priorities are identified and addressed to satisfy user needs. Also, at the design stage of surveys, some stakeholders are invited to participate in the design of the tools so that modules relevant to their institutions can easily and properly be incorporated. It also paves way for harmonizing methodologies in production.

The Bureau actively participates in AFRITAC, ECOWAS, AU, and other regional events outside the country. Active participation of the Bureau in regional and continental meetings are in line with strategic objectives of the Strategy for Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA). Background search and reviews are done to map new developments before a

particular survey is carried out. In addition, the User Satisfaction Survey, which was conducted in 2018 also identified user needs, some of which are new data requirements that need to be addressed.

0.4 Other quality management — *Quality is a cornerstone of statistical work*

0.4.1 Processes are in place to focus on quality.

One of the strategic goals of the statistical framework, the NSDS, is to assure production of quality data. This means that assessing data quality is one of the core aspects of works at GBoS. The governing council and management in their effort to increase advocacy, constantly stress the need to produce statistics of high quality. Quality issues are also raised in their speeches during conferences, workshops, media engagements.

During data dissemination workshops which often attracts high profile authorities from different institutions, importance of ensuring data quality are also highlighted. In addition, statistical trainings are provided to ensure that capacity is built in areas that are extremely important for maintaining quality of statistical outputs. For example, training on sampling design and selection for the NSS is an important step in ensuring that quality and sound methodologies are used in the production processes. Best practices are followed during data collection, editing and weighting procedures and provision of an infrastructure for quality by recognising trade-offs, economies of scale, and interrelations between datasets. GBoS has implemented some externally recognised quality measures to have quality statistical outputs. Quality information, usually part of statistical reports, is available and reported or disseminated through the GBoS website where users can have easy and free access.

0.4.2 Processes are in place to monitor quality during the planning and implementation of the statistical program.

There is a monitoring system in place to inform the management about the quality level for most statistical activities. During data collection process, secondary editors are tasked to work on data editing, consistency and error checking, and monitoring response rates. Systematic errors or inconsistencies are often documented and sent to field supervisors for verification. It is also communicated to senior management for possible actions. Comparisons are also made on response rates for example, of similar surveys and what actions need to be taken to maximise quality. Periodic reviews, best practices in data editing, and other measures aimed at maintaining quality in statistical outputs are often carried out to ensure consistency and minimize errors.

1 ASSURANCES OF INTEGRITY

Integrity identifies features that support firm adherence to objectivity in the collection, compilation, and dissemination of statistics in order to maintain users confidence. Elements refer to the professionalism and ethical standards that should guide policies and practices, which should be reinforced by their transparency.

1.2 Institutional Integrity — *Statistical policies and practices are guided by professional principles.*

1.2.1 *Statistics are produced on an impartial basis.*

Article 15(1) of the Statistics Act 2005 gives vested power to the President to appoint a Statistician-General in consultation with the Public Services Commission. Article 15(2d) mandates the Statistician-General to be professionally independent and impartial in the exercise of his/her duties, while Article 15(5) spells out the conditions under which the Statistician-General can be removed from office.

One of the core principles of GBoS is to operate with impartiality in data collection, analysis and dissemination of data. Guided by this principle, recruitment and promotion of staff are often based on expertise in statistical areas. However, for junior and other nonprofessional staff, there may be some deviations over the past few years. The governing council ensures neutrality in recruitment is practised.

Once staff are recruited, they are also trained formally on various areas of work. Overseas training are sometimes offered on short term basis. Sometimes experts from outside are paid to conduct relevant trainings, part of an overall strategy to increase the technical capacity of staff. Activities at GBoS largely promote culture of hard work, discipline, paying attention to methodological details, maintaining overall professionalism and good work ethics.

For any particular survey, concept note is developed, reviewed and finalised. The concept note is an important source of information for possible approval of funding. It contains rationale and justifications for conducting the survey. Contents of the concept notes are subject to periodic reviews to ensure professionalism is maintained.

1.2.2 *Choice of data sources and statistical techniques as well as decisions about dissemination are informed solely by statistical considerations.*

Statistical considerations inform decision on when and how to disseminate data for public consumption. From the design stage, appropriate sources of data are identified including the targeted respondents. For household sample surveys, in many cases, data sources are often households and therefore accurate sample design to get to respondents within the households are developed. For administrative data, relevant institutions which are to supply the data are clearly identified and followed.

The choice of analysis is also dependent on the nature of statistical variables involved. For statistical data dissemination, the website is considered as the number one platform where users can freely access and download reports. For dissemination workshops, seminars and conferences, good timing is essential. If the target audience is for example, parliamentarians or other high-profile politicians, prior consultations are made with them to agree on dates they will be available. The media plays a vital role in advocacy programmes and also dissemination process and debate and they are always invited. The kind of data to be disseminated informed the decision on the kind of participants to be invited.

1.1.3 The appropriate statistical entity is entitled to comment on erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics.

As part of effort to avert misinterpretation of statistics or misquoting figures, GBoS often conduct training for the media and civil society organizations on annual basis. During such trainings, explanation of basic statistics, how indicators are computed, and how they can be meaningfully interpreted. The accurate use of statistics in debate is also discussed. When misinterpretation or misuse of statistics occurs by the media, the right approach is to invite such media outlets and make necessary rectifications. Accurate media coverage of statistics is indispensable. GBoS monitors the media coverages to ensure that interpretations are done in an accurate manner. Statistical reports are written in an easy-to-understand manner so that misinterpretations can be avoided or minimized.

1.2 Transparency — *Statistical policies and practices are transparent*

1.2.1 The terms and conditions under which statistics are collected, processed, and disseminated are available to the public.

The statistical framework (Statistics Act 2005) has been disseminated through the GBoS website. Producers and users of statistics in NSS and the general public are informed about the principles of the Act. It is freely downloadable. During seminars, workshops, and conferences, people have been informed about the website. The revised Act (Statistics Act 2019) is billed and once approved by the Parliament, the Bureau will disseminate it on the website to ensure transparent access by everyone. Advocacy on the Statistics Act is actively done during workshops, seminars and conferences to remind participants about the mandate of GBoS and its activities. Statistical publications often include details of GBoS address and the website where users can easily access the publications. Printed hardcopies of statistical reports are also freely disseminated across the NSS.

1.2.2 Internal governmental access to statistics prior to their release is publicly identified.

The principle of professional independence as stated in the Statistics Act 2005 obliged the Bureau to work independently, free from any pressures or interference from political or other external sources, on the development, production and dissemination of statistics, including the selection of data sources, concepts, definitions, methods and classifications to be used, and the timing and content of all forms of dissemination. Therefore, the Bureau does not entertain internal government access. It could lead to potential distortion of figures and inaccurate political statements.

1.2.3 Products of statistical agencies/units are clearly identified as such.

Disseminated data has clear identification of GBoS as the authoritative source. GBoS is clearly identified in joint publication series with other stakeholder institutions. For the past years, for example, nutrition studies are jointly conducted by GBoS and National Nutrition Agency (NaNA). The Bureau is identified in the relevant parts of the reports. Ascribing

publications of works to GBoS is something the Bureau encourages. Data supplied by the Bureau has to be referenced clearly.

1.2.4 Advance notice is given of major changes in methodology, source data, and statistical techniques.

Effective statistical communication can facilitate other producers and users with information on current development in the statistical processes. When GBoS migrate to new statistical methodology, the NSS and the general public are informed during organized seminars, conferences, workshops and media briefings. Small shifts are not often communicated but are documented in the methodology part of the reports. If the current development requires any change in data source or techniques, user community, producers and the general public shall be duly notified immediately.

1.3 Ethical standards — *Policies and practices are guided by ethical standards*

1.3.1 Guidelines for staff behaviour are in place and are well known to the staff.

The GBoS Staff Service Rule is a document that specifies the terms and conditions of service and the basic rights, duties and obligations of the employees. It contains ethical standards that are expected of every staff. As expected, it is the responsibility of all staff of GBoS to be acquainted with the service rules and to act in accordance with the provisions therein at all times. The Service Rule is freely available on the website. Hard copies are also obtainable from the Directorate of Coordination, Methods, Quality Assurances and Dissemination.

2 Development of concepts, methods and design

Agencies initiating a new survey or major revision of an existing survey must develop a written plan that sets forth a justification, including: goals and objectives; potential users; the decisions the survey is designed to inform; key survey estimates; the precision required of the estimates (e.g., the size of differences that need to be detected); the tabulations and analytic results that will inform decisions and other uses; related and previous surveys; steps taken to prevent unnecessary duplication with other sources of information; when and how frequently users need the data; and the level of detail needed in tabulations, confidential microdata, and public-use data files.

2.1 Survey planning

2.1.1 Survey Planning take into consideration the professional principles and practices that research agencies are required to adhere to and the level of quality and effort expected in all statistical activities.

At the planning stage, prior consultations are always made. Some of the key users are identified and included in the Technical Working Groups (TWGs). The TWGs develop a concept note and share with potential donor agencies on justification and rationale of conducting the survey. It includes objectives, methodologies, the kind of indicators to be measured or computed, budgeting and all other necessary information for conducting the study. The inclusion of other stakeholders, especially at the planning stage, help to bring

together ideas that can be implemented practically. Further, the TWGs and study coordinators make periodic reviews of all the survey processes. They develop draft questionnaires or customize previously used ones to the current context. The developed tools have to be pretested to measure their performance and practicability in the field. Usually pretesting the instruments comes during the field work training sessions.

Quality control measures to monitor quality at different stages are documented and observed by Survey Quality Coordinators (QCs). The data processing experts together with secondary editors carry out evaluation of survey procedures, estimation processes, and quantifying measurement error. These procedures are documented and shared with senior management and the field supervisors. Part of the concept notes is the budgetary needs for the entire statistical processes. The concept note also details the timeline of the survey. Dissemination plans that detail the targeted audiences, budget, and place of dissemination and so on are developed together with programme details. Plan detailing data management for the study is developed and implemented.

2.2 Survey design

2.2.1 Survey design is developed, including defining the target population, designing the sampling plan, specifying the data collection instrument and methods, developing a realistic timetable and cost estimate, and selecting samples using generally accepted statistical methods (e.g., probabilistic methods that can provide estimates of sampling error).

Data collection instruments, manuals detailing methodological approach and other protocols are developed by the TWGs in consultation with other stakeholders. The questionnaires, training manuals and presentation slides are developed, reviewed and finalized. The concept note always detail the justifications and objectives of the study. During the training of field staff, specific days are allocated to pilot the tool. This is an important step to measure performance, consistency and practicability especially in the country context. Overall, except very rare cases, probability sampling methodologies are used as appropriate. The use of nonprobability approach is often discouraged for they are limited in terms of representativeness. With probability sampling techniques, the complex sampling package in the SPSS Complex Sample design (CS design) is used for designing variables and for selection. These techniques are widely used in household surveys for cluster and household selection.

The weighting procedures, an important statistical procedure, are observed to ensure representativeness at national and Local Government Areas (LGAs) as well as rural and urban levels. Administratively, the country is divided into eight LGAs. In many studies, these LGAs are either used as strata or analysis domains. In the event that a nonprobability methodology is to be used, then it is justified and documented. Samples are carefully designed and selected to ensure precision is achieved at both national and subpopulation levels. Budgetary consideration is maintained during decision on the size of sample. Careful attention and procedures are made during sampling plans and estimation process to achieve maximum accuracy at optimal cost. Every stage mentioned above is documented, reviewed, finalized and made available to the users.

2.3 Pretesting survey systems

2.3.1 Survey systems are pretested (ensure that all components of a survey function as intended when implemented in the full-scale survey and that measurement error is controlled by conducting a pretest of the survey components or by having successfully fielded the survey components on a previous occasion)

All components of survey function are pretested and relevant modifications are made to increase overall performance. It is a common practice at GBoS to pretest the survey instruments so that errors in the survey observations that may be caused by respondents, interviewers, data processors, and other survey personnel are often quantified and documented. The time of pretest is often done during training sessions so that errors due to poor questions or questionnaire design and inadequate personnel training or supervision can be controlled. Other practical realities are also documented by supervisors and interviewers. These recommendations often documented after field pretest are used to modify the tools to ensure good quality control system.

3 Collection of data

3.2 Developing sampling frames

3.1.1 The frames for the planned sample survey or census are appropriate for the study design and are evaluated against the target population for quality.

The current sampling frame is obtained from the 2013 Population and Housing Census. It has been updated by the 2015/2016 Integrated Household Survey. This is the frame used for household surveys. For business surveys, the frame is obtained from the 2015 Economic Census.

The frames are always updated to ensure any new developments are incorporated. Periodic review of the frame is important and is often carried out to achieve an accurate up to date information. Once the frame is complete, it is easier to reach targeted respondents.

Probability sampling involving multistage selection of sampling units are used in most of the Surveys conducted by the Bureau. Weighting and variance estimation procedures are used. These procedures are often used to ensure or to measure the closeness of the statistical estimates to their true population parameters. The Bureau also ensures that right procedures are followed to establish good precisions for inferential purposes. Ratio estimation, including relevant post-stratification techniques for classification groups, is often considered. In such cases, the use of auxiliary information is helpful.

3.1.2 Survey is designed to achieve high response rate

Response rate, a factor that can affect the magnitude of the sampling variance, is often high for household surveys conducted by the Bureau. At the design stage, one of the key objectives is to achieve the desired precision for the survey estimates. As such, GBoS often adjust the sample size of studies for the anticipated response rate. Previous household survey responses are always good indicators to inform the expected level of response in the

current studies. Good practices by GBoS to achieve desired precision includes selecting a larger sample based on an expected response rate estimated from previous surveys of the same nature or a pilot survey. Furthermore, survey weights are used in the analysis and estimation processes. At GBoS item nonresponse, often as a result of a respondent choosing to refuse certain modules in the questionnaire due to sensitivity issues, are not usually treated in measuring an overall nonresponse rate. On the other hand, unit nonresponses are always quantified, documented and reported.

3.1.3 Survey functions are pre-tested

Part of the strategies GBoS uses to determine the effectiveness of the survey questionnaires and all other components is to conduct pretest. It helps the Bureau to determine the strengths and weaknesses in the tool in terms of format, wording, skipping patterns, duration, and so on. Feedback from pretest also informed the Bureau to check the choice of analysis and assumptions.

3.1.4. Questionnaires are designed based on internationally accepted design principles

GBoS understands the importance of developing survey tools using current and sound design principles. Sound statistical processes are used in the production and dissemination of statistics. Survey protocols, manuals and other tools are reviewed and piloted. Similar statistical methodologies are used when computing some indicators to ensure regional comparability. The survey interview duration is carefully reviewed and actions are taken to ensure that respondents are not overly burden. Excessive respondent burden is a challenge the Bureau is facing as a result of poor regulatory systems in the data collection processes in the country.

3.2 Required notification to potential survey respondents

3.2.1 Appropriate informational materials are provided to respondents, addressing respondent burden as well as the scope and nature of the questions to be asked.

Introductory statements, preambles, and wording on consent are always officially written on first page of survey tools. This include all the necessary information the respondents need to know on how they have been selected for the study. It also includes information about the name and nature of the survey. Interviewers and supervisors are also trained on translating these statements into different local languages for the benefit of respondents. The nature of questions to be asked is survey specific and is often carefully checked. Further, all details including contact address and telephone numbers of GBoS and key staff are provided to the respondents in case they may need to contact the Bureau for additional information.

3.3 Data collection methodology

3.3.1 Data collection instrument is designed in a manner that minimizes respondent burden, while maximizing data quality.

Survey questionnaires are always very clearly written and skipping patterns can easily be followed by interviewers. In fact, in many cases, the tools can be self-administered by respondents as questions and response categories are clear. Now that GBoS is using Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) device in many sample surveys, skip patterns are automatically followed. Overall, interview durations are satisfactory from respondents' perspective. However, there are instances where the interview length is little bit longer. Item nonresponse are often encountered especially on sensitive modules in the tool. These have been a problem for many years but in many cases, they are often negligible during analysis

3.3.2 Respondents are encouraged to participate to maximize response rates and improve data quality.

Data collection period as detailed in the Concept note is always adequate. In the event that it is not, reasonable time is adjusted but at increased budget. For some surveys, advance letters are often sent to inform potential respondents about the survey. This was done in the last User Satisfaction Survey. In many cases, three attempts are often made in an effort to reach to targeted respondent.

During training sessions, field workers are trained on how to approach potential respondents, including appropriate dressing code, best ways of building rapport, respecting respondents even if they chose to refuse, and so on. They are also trained on how to approach conservative societies and measures to observe when asking sensitive questions. At GBoS, for the past few years, the culture of providing incentives has been discouraged. It could potentially cause problems such as changing the opinions of respondents. It may cause other poorer unselected households to label the Bureau in an unfair manner.

3.3.3 Data collection is designed and administered to contribute to data quality

Collecting data at the most appropriate time of the year is observed. However, sometimes because GBoS is donor dependent, funds are not secured timely and this could often affect the programmed workplan. Survey manuals and protocols are developed and hardcopies are given to field staff as reference manual. If need be, refresher trainings are conducted even during data collection period as a quality control measure.

Also, supervisors are often trained on doing re-interviews as a measure to verify the accuracy of responses. Interview durations are also strictly monitored. Extremely short interviews are rechecked, remotely verified and respondents are contacted again to establish what went wrong. Interviewers who deliberately change respondents ages for age-specific surveys are monitored by the supervisors through verification of household rosters. Sometimes, GBoS conduct simulation studies during sampling design to ensure that correct assumptions are made for the new survey. Survey protocols developed by GBoS in consultation with relevant stakeholders are strictly followed to achieve quality. Measurement errors including nonresponse rate are often quantified, documented and disseminated.

3.3.4 Develop protocols to monitor data collection activities, with strategies to correct identified problems.

Process control systems to monitor activities during data collection are sometimes developed and used. For example, they were used in the 2018 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS). Each interviewer was monitored and feedbacks were sent to the field supervisors. In addition, field supervisors often do some re-interviews as a verification method. Field coordinators do some verifications on interviews suspected of being badly done. There is always secondary data editing during which field check tables are produced to check on response rates, inconsistencies, errors and performance of each interviewer. Consistency checks are done and reports are produced based on these tables. Feedback system are in place to ensure accurate procedures are observed.

Generally, response rates are never low. Usually response rates are 95% and above. For some studies, response items are considered in the analysis. However, if the respondent is pretty unwilling after three attempts, it is considered as refusal.

4 Processing and editing of data

Data editing is an iterative and interactive process that includes procedures for detecting and correcting errors in the data. Editing uses available information and some assumptions to derive substitute values for inconsistent values in a data file. When electronic data collection methods are used, data are usually edited both during and after data collection.

4.1 Data editing – data are appropriately edited to mitigate or correct detectable errors

4.1.1 Data are checked and edited to mitigate errors

Survey response categories are properly checked for completeness. One of the best measures to mitigate errors is through consistency checks which are done by secondary editors during field data collection. Field check tables are produced including response totals for categories. Verifications are conducted and necessary actions are taken. Responses that are not consistent or errors in skip patterns are thoroughly investigated and addressed for every study. Data is checked for omission and for duplication of records. If they exist, editors consult the supervisors for necessary field verifications.

4.2 Nonresponse analysis and response rate calculation

4.2.1 All response rates, unweighted and weighted, are calculated

At GBoS, probability sampling is used for almost all the surveys. In this regard, weights (inverses of selection probabilities) are computed at each stage of selection. Thus, weighted response rates are computed and documented. Unweighted unit response rates when necessary, are also quantified. Weights on unit response rates are computed to take into

account the different selection probabilities of sample units (households) at different stages. Unit response rate are always calculated and reported.

4.3 Coding

4.3.1 Standardised codes added to convert information collected as text into a form that permits immediate analysis to enhance comparability

The practice of imputing codes, especially for missing values, is not often practiced. It is important to get to know the nature of the missing data. Standardized codes if available are used in converting text data to numeric values for easier analysis and interpretation.

4.4 Data protection

4.4.1 Safeguards must be implemented throughout the production process to ensure that survey data are handled to avoid disclosure

Systematic procedures aimed at ensuring or protecting information during all stages of production are followed. Survey hard copy forms are properly handled to ensure confidential information is not easily disclosed. For the electronic data, due to lack of proper archiving, data could easily or accidentally be disclosed if outsiders (non-staff) could have access to GBoS computers. Controlled access to datasets is loosely restricted. Data security principles should always be maintained to assure highest confidentiality.

4.5 Evaluation

4.5.1 An evaluation component is included in the survey plan that evaluates survey procedures, results, and measurement error

Once the Technical Working Group (TWG) is set up for a particular Survey, their first task is to review literature (including past surveys, models, etc.) including methodologies, potential errors for the survey. The strategic recommendations gathered are thus adopted and included in the new survey. Documentation on sampling and non-sampling errors are often produced for some Surveys. Deviations from computing sampling errors were observed in other Surveys. Post collection analysis are important; however, limited resources means the Bureau could not carry out the analysis. It is hoped that with sufficient resources, post collection analysis will be carried out.

5 Production of survey estimates, data analysis and dissemination

5.1 Developing estimates and projections

5.1.1 Direct survey estimates are developed

Survey weights are computed at different stages of selection. These weights are used in the analysis to compute population estimates. Auxiliary data are used in many instances to improve precision and to achieve right distributions. For example, GBoS has been using

census data for post-stratification, ratio estimation and adjustments. These techniques are used to ensure that distribution of age groups, gender or other socio-demographic characteristics in the survey are reflection of those in census data or auxiliary data. The variance estimation (Taylor linearization in many instances) is used in some surveys. If imputation methods are used for missing or inconsistent values, then variance estimation is used to establish variation due to both imputation and sampling variance. As the methods are often complex, they are not computed for other surveys. Right assumptions, model specifications are developed in line with sound and accepted standards.

5.1.2 Model-based estimates are developed according to accepted theory and practices (e.g., assumptions, mathematical specifications)

Model assumptions are checked through sensitivity analysis. For example, in the 2015/16 Integrated Household Survey, sensitivity analysis was carried out for models that were used in poverty estimation processes. Model validation are carried out when necessary. Models are formulated and assumptions are made carefully to ensure that results are reproducible.

5.1.3 Methods and models used to generate estimates and projections are documented

Methodologies including models used in the analysis are documented and disseminated on the website. The assumptions made in computing projections are also documented to ensure reproducibility.

5.2 Analysis and report planning

5.2.1 Analysis plan are developed ahead of the report writing

Technical reports containing all the information including dummy tables are developed. Dummy tables are often prepared as part of pre-analysis plan. The technical documents also contain technical details on carrying out the survey. At GBoS, the work plan is often developed prior to statistical analysis. The cost of conducting the study or the budget plan is used to buy necessary logistical needs.

5.3 Releasing information

5.3.1 Best practices are adopted for the release of information

There is no release calendar developed at GBoS for surveys. However, when dissemination is to be conducted, relevant targeted institutions/civil society organizations are informed in advance. Targeted audiences are often identified based on the kind of information to be disseminated. If for instance, Labour Force Survey is to be disseminated, then the targeted respondents will include Ministry of Trade and Employment, Labour Department etc. Official letters are written to such audiences informing them of the place and time of dissemination. In addition, draft copies of survey report are sent to them in advance through either hardcopies or electronic format so that they can document their comments and

recommendations in advance. Data is disseminated to all stakeholders at the same time. Users are always informed of the sources where data is always available.

5.3.2 Information is protected against any unauthorised pre-release

Staff of the Bureau and stakeholders who might have received draft copies of releases before they are validated and officially disseminated are advised that unauthorized release of such materials is an offence. Such offence attracts penalties. Any publication that is obtained from other sources other than from GBoS website may be potentially an authorized source.

5.3.3 A schedule for anticipated revisions is publicised

Anticipated revision schedule is developed and shared among users if need be. A policy for handling unscheduled corrections due to previously unrecognised errors is established.

5.4 Data protection and disclosure avoidance for dissemination

5.4.1 Best practices that may be useful in fulfilling the goals of the data protection are applied

As stated in the Statistic Act 2005, revised and billed as Statistic Act 2019, there is a penalty for disclosure of confidential information. There are procedures in place including data anonymization to maintain respondent confidentiality. At GBoS, parameters associated with disclosure limitation rules are not revealed publicly.

5.5 Survey documentation

5.5.1 Survey documentation are readily accessible to users, unless it is necessary to restrict access to protect confidentiality

Detailed survey planning, design methodology, budget, etc. are documented in the Concept notes. It also contains justifications for conducting the survey. Detailed evaluation reports are often produced. Description of models, including key assumptions are produced and documented. Survey documentation are available and users need to request for through the Statistician General.

5.5.2 Public-use microdata documentation and metadata are accessible to users

Metadata and complete documentation are often provided. Overall file descriptions, variable names and labels are always provided. In the last User Satisfaction Survey, users reported the need for the Bureau to always disseminate statistical metadata. Newly added variables computed from other variables are always named and labelled appropriately to give potential users more information. Microdata is not always readily available to users for confidentiality reasons. If the requests for such data are made, care is taken to ensure

anonymized versions are given (Article 25(3) of the Statistics Act 2005). If microdata is to be disseminated for public consumption, careful procedures are taken to ensure respondent information are kept confidential. At the Bureau all microdata files are appropriately stored.

Figure 5: The Gambia: Level of observance of international standards and good practices in the conduct of sample surveys

