

## Vision and Policy Intent

The [Tonga National Strategy for Development of Statistics \(NSDS\) 2019–2023](#) sets a vision to be recognised as the best statistical system to assist the development and management of the Kingdom of Tonga.

The Tonga NSDS 2019–2023 identifies five strategic objectives:

- Statistical legislation and policy,
- Communication, access and use,
- Data and information management,
- Tonga national statistical system coordination, and
- Resource development.

Other national policies and plans relevant to [Tonga Statistics Department \(TSD\)](#) and NSDS:

- [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals](#) and the National Statistical System
- Tonga Strategic Development Framework (2015–2025).

## National Statistical System

The TSD—established in 1975 and operating under the Statistics Act Cap. 53 of the Laws of Tonga—is the lead statistics agency, managed by the Government Statistician or Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

Under the [Statistics Act 2015](#), revised from the Statistics Act No. 31 of 1978 (original), the Statistics Department, a Department of the Government of Tonga, is the principal authority for producing official statistics of Tonga, necessary for social and economic development, planning and management of the Kingdom of Tonga.

**Other data producers** of official statistics as in the NSDS:

- Government Ministries and other agencies.

**Key users of official statistics:**

- Government Agencies,
- Politicians,
- Private Sector, and
- International Organisations, Research, Academia, Media, etc.

## Key Features

The TSD, guided under the Statistics Act 2015, is enacted to collect, compile, analyse, abstract, and publish official statistics on commerce, people, communities, environment and Government performance.

**Data collection** – most recent [population and housing census 2021](#), [HIES 2021](#), [labour force survey 2023](#), [National Vital Statistics Report 2018–2020](#).

**Dissemination** – main publication: economics and social statistics, census and surveys.

[TSD’s Statistics Release calendar](#) outlines expected release dates for statistics publications.

**ICT Statistical Infrastructure** – TSD has developed its own [website](#) and has links to tools: [Teacher student corner](#), [Tonga PopGIS3](#), [Pacific Data Hub](#).

**The main ICT activities** in the NSDS are to: review or establish protocols for collection, classification, quality assurance, sharing and dissemination of statistics.

## Coordination

The TSD is responsible for coordinating the practices of departments in collection, compilation and dissemination of statistics and related information.

The Statistics Act 2015 established a **National Statistics Advisory Council (NSAC)** to advise the Minister on official statistics necessary for economic and social development planning and management of the Kingdom.

NSAC members include:

- Government Statistician, Ex-Officio.
- Minister may appoint appropriately qualified persons from government, business and the community.

The NSAC is supported by the NSDS Steering Committee (co-chairs: Directors of Statistics and Planning).

Proposed membership: chairs of each of the three Sectoral Technical Working Groups.

## Challenges, priorities and opportunities

**Key challenges** affecting TSD performance as outlined in the NSDS 2019–2023 include:

- **Resource allocation:** 40% staff vacancy rate could not meet the increasing statistics demand and new domain statistics.
- **Statistical coordination:** No visible evidence of statistical coordination taking place yet.
- **Dated and irregular accessibility of data and statistical products.**

**Priorities** as specified in the Tonga NSDS 2019–2023 include:

- **ongoing development of strategic relationships**, at organisational and individual levels,
- **alignment of the NSDS strategic and operational outputs** with National and Regional Development Policy Commitments,
- **training opportunities and capacity building initiatives**, and
- **coordination and consolidation of statistical resources** (human, equipment, facilities, software and hardware platforms).