



## 1. Project Data

<b>Project ID</b> P157987	<b>Project Name</b> Bangladesh NSDS Implementation Support	
<b>Country</b> Bangladesh	<b>Practice Area(Lead)</b> Poverty and Equity	
<b>L/C/TF Number(s)</b> IDA-61930	<b>Closing Date (Original)</b>	<b>Total Project Cost (USD)</b> 13,100,896.42
<b>Bank Approval Date</b> 29-Mar-2018	<b>Closing Date (Actual)</b> 27-Feb-2024	
	<b>IBRD/IDA (USD)</b>	<b>Grants (USD)</b>
Original Commitment	0.00	0.00
Revised Commitment	15,000,000.00	0.00
Actual	13,100,896.42	0.00

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## 2. Project Objectives and Components

### a. Objectives

The project development objective (PDO) was to strengthen the capacity of the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) to produce high quality core statistics and make them accessible in a timely manner to policy makers and the public. For this Review, the objectives are parsed as follows:

1. Increase the capacity of BBS to produce high quality core statistics.



2. Increase the capacity of BBS to make statistics accessible in a timely manner to policy makers and the public.

One outcome target was revised downward at a September 2021 restructuring, and therefore a split evaluation is undertaken.

- b. Were the project objectives/key associated outcome targets revised during implementation?**  
Yes

**Did the Board approve the revised objectives/key associated outcome targets?**  
Yes

**Date of Board Approval**  
16-Sep-2021

- c. Will a split evaluation be undertaken?**  
Yes

**d. Components**

**1. Improving the Coordination and Management of Statistical Activities.** (US\$1 million at appraisal, US\$0.376 million at closure\*). This component aimed at improving coordination among the different agencies in charge of collecting statistics and improving the statistical management systems of the BBS. This implied the signing of several Memoranda of Understandings (MOUs) between the BBS and different government agencies on data collection and data sharing, and the identification of areas where improvements were needed to enhance coordination.

**2. Developing Human Resources and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Infrastructure to Produce and Manage Data.** (US\$5 million at appraisal, US\$4.663 million at closure\*). This component aimed at enhancing the training capacity of BBS by strengthening the Statistical Staff Training Institute and developing a training policy to systematize training for BBS staff.

**3. Improving the Coverage and Quality of Core Statistics Required for Policy Making,** (US\$7 million at appraisal, US\$6.208 million at completion\*). This component aimed at improving the design, implementation, and information generated by core priority indicators represented by national accounts, price statistics, social statistics, and agricultural statistics by creating an enabling environment through strengthening coordination mechanisms and regulations, and by improving management systems and both human and physical capital.

**4. Promoting and Strengthening Access and the Use of Official Statistics** (US\$0.8 million at appraisal, US\$0.435 million at completion\*). This component aimed at improving access to official statistics and metadata for government officials and the public by implementing a dissemination policy, providing wide access to statistical products, and enhancing user-producer dialogue.

**5. Project Management** (US\$1.2 million at appraisal, US\$1.418 million at closure\*). This component aimed at supporting the establishment of the Project Implementation Unit (PIU) in order to ensure proper project



implementation and coordination, effective monitoring and evaluation of results, and a consistent and effective approach to achieve the project objectives.

*\* Note: Since the exchange rate between BDT and US\$ varied significantly during project implementation (from BDT82.9 per US\$ at project approval to BDT119.5 per US\$ at project closure), the value of project cost at closure reported above has been estimated by using an average exchange rate of BDT to US\$ of 87.43.*

#### **e. Comments on Project Cost, Financing, Borrower Contribution, and Dates**

The project's cost at appraisal was US\$15 million. Of that amount, US\$13.1 million was actually disbursed. No reason is given in the ICR for the undisbursed share. The project team explained offered the explanation that the discrepancy was due to exchange rate fluctuations. When the project was approved in 2018, the exchange rate was BDT82.9 per US\$. The exchange rate increased over the implementation period to BDT117.50 per US\$ at project closing. Neither the overall project amount in BDT was revised nor the ceiling changed by the government.

The closing date was extended three times, and while the components were not changed, the implementation schedule and results framework (RF) were revised in the second and third restructurings. The first restructuring in March 2020 (US\$2.72 million disbursed) extended the closing date from February 28, 2022, to August 31, 2022. This was deemed necessary because of the slow progress made by the project as consequence of delays in hiring short-term consultants for the PIU and delays in procuring the Twinning Partner (TP).

The second restructuring in September 2021 (US\$7.41 million disbursed) extended the closing date of the project from August 31, 2022, to June 30, 2023, and introduced changes to the RF. The date extension was due to the onset of COVID-19 which caused delays in implementation. Changes to the RF were made to adjust indicators measuring improvements in core statistics, the number of core statistics and surveys to be supported, and the end target for releasing key core statistics, because of uncertainty caused by the pandemic.

The third restructuring in January 2023 (US\$9.74 million disbursed) extended the project's closing date from June 30, 2023 to February 27, 2024. It also introduced changes to the RF, specifically to intermediate-level indicator 4: "Mechanisms are put in place to enhance coordination." This change replaced the "National Statistical Coordination Committee" with the "National Advisory Committee on Statistics (NACS)" to secure support from a higher authority and ensure ministerial representation.

### **3. Relevance of Objectives**

#### **Rationale**

Strong economic growth in Bangladesh during the period prior to this project contributed to a reduction of poverty. Poverty incidence (measured by US\$1.90 per capita per day, in 2011 Purchasing Power Parity) declined from 44.2 percent in 1991 to 13.8 percent in 2016. Despite these development achievements,



Bangladesh remained one of the poorest countries in South Asia, with limited public services and comparatively weak institutions.

As part of its Seventh Five Year Plan (FY16–FY20), the Government of Bangladesh (GOB) committed to achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and to monitoring progress towards the achievement of these goals through the timely availability of reliable statistics for evidence-based planning and policy making. The GOB had taken several steps to improve the availability, quality, and reliability of statistics. Between 2007 and 2009, the BBS initiated several reforms to improve the coverage and quality of statistics in key areas. Later, in 2010 and 2011, it prepared the first National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS), which mapped out a development path for the National Statistical System (NSS). In 2013, the GOB approved the NSDS and the Statistics Act, which envisaged the creation of a professional and efficient NSS with the ability to produce high quality and up-to-date official statistics in a transparent and timely manner. The NSDS was implemented over the period from 2013 to 2023.

The PDO was aligned with the Bangladesh 7th Five Year Plan and with the Country Partnership Framework (CPF, FY16-FY20) and continued to be relevant to the CPF at closing (FY23-FY27) and the GOB strategy for the development of statistics. The FY2023-2027 CPF recognized the importance of a national statistical system to design, monitor, and evaluate development programs, and highlighted the importance of and the critical support the Bank can provide to strengthen the quality and reliability of official statistics. Under CPF Objective 3, the Bank planned to help the BSS to improve the availability, accessibility, frequency, and quality of official statistics. The 2021 Systematic Country Diagnostic Update emphasized the need to build effective and efficient institutions and the need to build strong statistical capacity in order to support evidence-based policy reforms. The project objectives were also aligned with the NSDS 2013-2023, the 8th Five Year Plan, the Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 (BDP2100), the Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan and its Nationally Determined Contribution, and the Perspective Plan for Bangladesh 2021-2041 (PP2041), all of which called for the production and dissemination of high-quality official statistics to inform policy making.

The project was aligned with the Bank's corporate goals of ending extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity.

## Rating

High

## 4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy)

### OBJECTIVE 1

#### Objective

Increase the capacity of BBS to produce high quality statistics

#### Rationale



To achieve this objective the project focused on two activities: a) creating an enabling environment by strengthening coordination mechanisms and reviewing by-laws and regulations, and b) improving BBS' management systems, human capital, and physical infrastructure.

The Results Chain (RC) was clear (ICR, p. 9 and annex 5 p. 34), although at times the distinction between outputs and outcomes is not clear. It started by describing the three main challenges to the production and distribution of high-quality official statistics. They are represented by: first, the presence of an enabling legal and institutional environment in which the statistical system can conduct its activities, with such an environment improved by updating statistical legislation, policies, and institutional arrangements; second, a proper BBS organization and production process, which can be addressed by strengthening BBS' management systems, improving its human capacity, and its ICT infrastructure; and third, an appropriate user-producer dialogue that encourages the usage of statistics, which can be improved with an appropriate dissemination policy, the production and dissemination of appropriate metadata and microdata, and relevant training courses for data users. Taken together, these outputs would have been expected to result in enhanced capacity of the BBS to produce and disseminate high-quality data.

The key challenges were correctly identified, although one additional challenge was not included in the results chain: the need for clear career growth opportunities for professional statisticians. The lack of such opportunities has the potential to undermine staff morale and push them to leave the national statistical system, compromising the capacity built by the project.

One PDO-level indicator and four intermediate-level indicators were used for this objective. All indicator targets were achieved.

- **PDO Indicator 1: Core statistics are improved in line with international standards.** Seven out of eight (87.5 percent) identified core statistics were improved in line with international standards and best practices. Through a Twinning Partner, BBS leveraged international expertise across various statistical domains. Core statistics were deemed improved if predefined improvement needs were addressed, including methodological enhancements, the development of manuals, piloting new approaches, and providing training. The baseline was 0 percent (2018), the target was 50 percent (2024), and the actual was 87.5 percent (2024) (ICR, p. 11). At the second restructuring, this indicator was changed from "core statistics" broadly defined, to "survey/data under 8 core statistics," since these were the set of core statistics regularly produced by the BBS on consistent intervals. This revision merely made the indicator more precise and did not represent a material change or a change in scope. **(PDO Indicator 1: achieved).**
- **Intermediate Indicator 1: Mechanisms are put in place to enhance coordination.** Five MoUs were signed and are operational. The NACS was formed, and five meetings were held. The baseline was having meetings on an ad-hoc basis, the target was four MoUs and two meetings (2018), and the actual was five MoUs and five meetings (2024) (ICR, p. 13). **(Intermediate Indicator 1: achieved).**
- **Intermediate Indicator 2: Conducting assessments and training for better management systems.** A functional review of BBS was conducted, and its Implementation Plan was approved. Staff trained included 15 officers on financial management and 40 on public procurement. The baseline was no functional review and limited financial management and procurement capacity; the target was a functional review completed with an implementation plan approved, and at least 4 staff trained on financial management and 40 on public procurement (2018); and the actual was a functional review conducted, implementation plan approved, 15 staff trained on financial management, and 40 staff trained on procurement (2024) (ICR, p. 12). **(Intermediate Indicator 2: achieved).**



- **Intermediate Indicator 3: Investments in ICT infrastructure to support data collection and management.** An ICT and Roadmap (including an implementation plan) was prepared and approved. The baseline was an inadequate ICT infrastructure; the target was an ICT plan completed (2018); and the actual was an ICT Plan and Roadmap prepared and approved (2024) (ICR, p. 12). **(Intermediate Indicator 3: achieved).**
- **Intermediate Indicator 5 [1]: Implementation of training policy to develop human resources.** Around 6,455 BBS officials were trained (17.8 percent female officials), and two courses for other government officials, and two courses for media personnel, were conducted. The baseline was training conducted ad hoc; the target was 500 BBS staff trained (10 percent women), two training courses delivered to government officials, and two training courses delivered to the media (2018); and the actual was 6,455 BBS officials trained (17.8 percent female officials), two courses delivered to other government officials, and two courses delivered to media personnel (2024) (ICR, p. 12). **(Intermediate Indicator 5: achieved).**

These were appropriate indicators to measure capacity to produce high-quality statistics. Hence, this objective was substantially achieved.

[1] Intermediate Indicator 4 relates to Objective 2.

## Rating

Substantial

## OBJECTIVE 2

### Objective

Increase the capacity of BBS to make statistics accessible in a timely manner to policy makers and the public (original outcome targets)

### Rationale

To achieve this objective, the project focused on four activities: a) introduce an effective and clear dissemination policy, b) release core statistics according to a pre-defined calendar, c) anonymize and make accessible core surveys' microdata, and d) increase user satisfaction. The RC described under Objective 1 plausibly connected these activities to the outcome of increased accessibility of statistics in a timely manner.

Three PDO-level indicators and one intermediate-level indicator were used to measure this objective. Two of the three PDO-level indicator targets were achieved, and the intermediate-level indicator target was also met.

- **PDO Indicator 2: Core statistics are released according to a pre-defined calendar.** Four out of eight core statistics were conducted, and the data and reports were made available on BBS's new website according to a pre-defined calendar. The baseline was no formal release calendar was in place (2018), the original target was 80 percent of the core statistics disseminated on time as announced in the release calendar (2024), and the actual achievement at project closing was 50 percent of the selected core statistics released according to a calendar available on BBS website (2024) (ICR, p. 11). **(PDO indicator 2: not achieved under the original outcome target).**



- **PDO Indicator 3: Core surveys' microdata anonymized and made accessible.** Five core surveys' microdata were anonymized and made accessible. The baseline was 0 percent (2018), the target was 40 percent (2024), and the actual was 100 percent of the five surveys (2024) (ICR, p. 11). At restructuring, this indicator was changed from "all microdata of all core statistics" to "microdata of five core surveys identified for anonymization and accessibility," to align the target with the five core surveys that were expected to be carried out during the project's lifetime. This revision merely made the indicator more precise and did not represent a material change or a change in scope. **(PDO Indicator 3: achieved).**
- **PDO Indicator 4: Increased user satisfaction.** Two User Satisfaction Surveys (USS) were conducted, showing an increase in user satisfaction. The baseline was no formal strategy to gather users' satisfaction (2018); the target was 50 percent of indicators in the USS show improvement in user satisfaction compared to baseline (2024); and the actual was 84.6 percent of indicators on satisfaction of use of official statistics show improvement (2024) (ICR p. 12). **(PDO indicator 4: achieved).**
- **Intermediate Indicator 4: Introduction of an effective and clear dissemination policy.** A Data Dissemination Policy covering guidelines on data sharing was prepared and approved by BBS management, and it was approved by the Statistics and Informatics Division (SID) of the Ministry of Planning. The baseline was no formal dissemination policy in place (2018); the target was approval of a dissemination policy for core statistics (2024); and the actual was a formal dissemination policy prepared and approved by BBS management and by SID for operationalization (2024) (ICR, p. 12). **(Intermediate indicator 4: achieved).**

These were appropriate indicators to measure increased capacity of BBS to make statistics accessible in a timely manner to policy makers and the public. With the key outcome target on timely dissemination of key statistics not achieved (PDO Indicator 2), achievement of this objective under the original outcome targets is rated Modest.

**Rating**  
Modest

## **OBJECTIVE 2 REVISION 1**

### **Revised Objective**

Increase the capacity of BBS to make statistics accessible in a timely manner to policy makers and the public (revised outcome targets)

### **Revised Rationale**

**PDO Indicator 2: Core statistics are released according to a pre-defined calendar.** At the project's second restructuring, the target was revised from 80 percent to 40 percent to be more realistic and feasible within the project's lifetime, given early implementation challenges, delays in securing government funding approval, and initial lack of an approved pre-defined calendar. Four out of eight core statistics were conducted, and the data and reports were made available on BBS's new website according to a pre-defined calendar. The baseline was no formal release calendar was in place (2018), the revised target was 40 percent of the core statistics disseminated on time as announced in the release calendar (2024), and the actual achievement at project closing was 50 percent of the selected core statistics released according to a



calendar available on BBS website (2024) (ICR, p. 11). **(PDO Indicator 2: achieved under the revised outcome target).**

With all outcome targets fully achieved (PDO Indicators 2 to 4), including the revised target for the second outcome indicator, achievement of this objective under the revised targets is rated Substantial.

**Revised Rating**  
Substantial

## **OVERALL EFFICACY**

### **Rationale**

Overall efficacy under the original outcome targets is rated substantial, though the achievement of Objective 2—to increase the capacity of BBS to make statistics accessible in a timely manner to policymakers and the public—is rated modest.

### **Overall Efficacy Rating**

Substantial

## **OVERALL EFFICACY REVISION 1**

### **Overall Efficacy Revision 1 Rationale**

Under the revised outcome targets, overall efficacy remains substantial, with the achievement of both objectives (PDO 1 and 2) rated substantial.

### **Overall Efficacy Revision 1 Rating**

Substantial

## **5. Efficiency**

According to the ICR, a cost-benefit analysis was not undertaken because it is not possible to assess the benefits of a public good, such as the production, analysis, and dissemination of official statistics to inform development policy decisions.

The efficiency of the project is instead judged on its ability to improve the quality, cost, and availability of official statistics compared to previous practices. The delivery of training to improve BBS staff capacity to conduct large-scale statistical operations following international standards resulted in improved quality of the data collected.





The use of modern data collection technologies, such as computer-assisted personal interviewing, and the conduct of refresher trainings enhanced fieldwork logistics. This represents a significant improvement in efficiency compared to the earlier, paper-based data collection system. The upgrading of office facilities, ICT equipment, and software also contributed to enhanced processes and monitoring of data collection and shortened the release time of results, with survey results disseminated within one to three months after data collection. All these factors contributed to cost and time efficiencies in data collection.

Survey implementation experienced some delays in: (a) setting up the PIU, (b) obtaining Cabinet Committee on Government Purchase approval on the main contract with the joint venture Twinning Partner (TP) firm; and (c) travel disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite these challenges, implementation proceeded smoothly, supported by strong government ownership and the strong skills and ability of the project's implementation team.

### Efficiency Rating

Substantial

a. If available, enter the Economic Rate of Return (ERR) and/or Financial Rate of Return (FRR) at appraisal and the re-estimated value at evaluation:

	Rate Available?	Point value (%)	*Coverage/Scope (%)
Appraisal		0	0 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable
ICR Estimate		0	0 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable

\* Refers to percent of total project cost for which ERR/FRR was calculated.

### 6. Outcome

According to harmonized IEG/OPCS guidelines, the overall outcome rating of a restructured project is determined by weighting the amount of Bank financing that disbursed before and after the restructuring. At the 2021 restructuring that revised the outcome target, US\$7.41 million, or 56.6 percent of Bank funds (7.41/13.1), had been disbursed.

Rating Dimension	Original Objectives	Objectives after Revision
Relevance of Objectives	<b>High</b>	
Objective 1: Increase the capacity of BBS to produce high quality statistics.	Substantial	Substantial
Objective 2: Increase the capacity of BBS to make statistics accessible in a timely manner to policy makers and the public.	Modest	Substantial
Overall Efficacy	<b>Substantial</b>	<b>Substantial</b>



Efficiency	<b>Substantial</b>	
Outcome rating	<b>Moderately Satisfactory</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>
Outcome rating value	4	5
Amount disbursed	US\$7.41 million	US\$5.69 million
Disbursement (%)	56.6 percent	43.4 percent
Weight value	2.26	2.17
Total weights	<b>4.43 (rounds down to 4.0)</b>	
Overall outcome rating	<b>Moderately Satisfactory</b>	

The project's outcome is rated Moderately Satisfactory, reflecting moderate shortcomings in the project's achievement of its objectives

**a. Outcome Rating**  
Moderately Satisfactory

**7. Risk to Development Outcome**

The ICR identified three potential risks to the development outcomes of this project: (1) the need for sustained political support from the GoB to establish and maintain the legal, administrative, and budgetary frameworks required for producing and disseminating high-quality official statistics; (2) challenges related to institutional capacity for effective implementation and sustainability, including fiduciary management; and (3) the potential duplication of efforts among development partners.

The risk to the development outcome is considered low, as the improvements in capacity and infrastructure, combined with the increased availability of reliable statistics, are expected to sustain demand for high-quality core statistics. Additionally, the NSDS 2024–2030 and a proposed public sector operation, which includes a significant focus on data and aims to strengthen the capacity of the NSS and the BBS, demonstrate continued government and development partner commitment to sustaining and advancing the project outcomes.

**8. Assessment of Bank Performance**

**a. Quality-at-Entry**

The technical design of the project was not discussed in the ICR's section on quality at entry. However, the project team elaborated to IEG that the project's technical design was guided by the priorities outlined by the NSDS 2013–2024 and was informed by intensive consultations with staff and management of the BBS, other relevant government agencies, and donors. The project's design was in line with international good practices as recommended by the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century, an initiative that aimed to promote better production and use of statistics throughout the developing world. The production, processing, and dissemination of high-quality data followed international best practices and were based on survey manuals and operational guidelines. The process involved investing in



management skills, strengthening coordination across agencies, and developing regulations that allowed for a strong NSS and the modernization of BBS' ICT infrastructure.

According to the ICR, several indicators adopted "international standards" and "international best practices," such as the Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM), General Activity Model of Statistical Organizations (GAMSO), and the UN National Quality Assurance Framework as benchmarks to measure the achievement of objectives. In line with the identified challenges, the project supported the modernization of BBS' ICT infrastructure and produced several manuals, such as a glossary that served as a user-friendly ready reference for statistical personnel, to remove ambiguity and misconception by all users of statistical data (ICR, p. 9).

The Bank conducted a thorough risk assessment at appraisal and implemented several mitigating measures. To help reduce the risk of low implementation capacity of BBS staff, the project adopted several strategies, including entering into twinning arrangements with a consortium of experts, which provided training on financial management, procurement, and other technical areas.

However, the project design showed several shortcomings. First, the implementation unit was not ready to hire key personnel as planned due to the steps needed for BBS to hire international consultants. Second, the project lacked clarity in defining key terms, including what constituted "core" statistics, how they related to "core surveys," and the specific "users" of the statistics. This ambiguity necessitated further definition of key indicators during project restructurings. Third, there was no initial pre-defined calendar for release of core statistics, resulting in ambiguity on PDO indicator 2 to release statistics according to such a calendar, and eventually requiring downward revision of the target for that indicator. Finally, the project did not adequately address the potential risk associated with the lack of clear career growth opportunities for professional statisticians. The project team noted to IEG that establishing clear career growth paths for BBS staff required institutional reforms that were outside the scope of the project.

### **Quality-at-Entry Rating**

Moderately Satisfactory

#### **b. Quality of supervision**

According to the ICR, the Bank team conducted regular supervision and implementation support missions, as evidenced by 12 Implementation Status and Results Reports (ISRs). Key team members, including the Task Team Leader and other project staff, were based in the field, facilitating close supervision and support during project implementation. The team conducted three implementation support missions per year from 2018 to 2024, along with a mid-term review mission. This support allowed the team to discuss and resolve issues raised during implementation. The task team also demonstrated flexibility by adapting to changing circumstances, such as switching to virtual missions due to travel restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Quality of Supervision Rating**

Satisfactory



## **Overall Bank Performance Rating**

Moderately Satisfactory

## **9. M&E Design, Implementation, & Utilization**

### **a. M&E Design**

The project included appropriate indicators to monitor progress towards achieving the PDOs. The M&E design and RF were well-structured, allowing for effective tracking of progress. The results framework included indicators aligned with project components and objectives, facilitating measurement of outcomes, though there was lack of clarity in several of the indicators as initially defined, requiring later revisions (see Section 8a). The annual implementation plans, prepared by the PIU and approved by the BBS Director General, were integrated into the M&E design, providing a detailed list of activities, timelines, and outputs.

### **b. M&E Implementation**

The ICR indicates that the M&E system was effectively implemented, with regular data collection and analysis supporting informed decision-making throughout the project lifecycle. Every six months the task team, PIU, and TP conducted an implementation supervision mission, updated the RF, and identified issues and actions to undertake to ensure the proper implementation of the project. Each mission highlighted key implementation challenges and provided updates on all issues, recommendations, and progress on actions agreed in previous implementation support missions through Aide Memoires/technical notes.

The financial management and procurement specialists hired by the PIU and the Bank's fiduciary team were part of the implementation support team to ensure reporting and auditing activities as well as compliance with the Bank's procurement, disbursement, and financial management procedures. The Project Steering Committee (PSC), headed by the SID Secretary, included representatives from the Ministry of Finance, other government agencies, and the BBS. The PSC helped ensure that implementation followed both government and Bank rules and procedures and provided overall policy guidance.

### **c. M&E Utilization**

The six-month progress reports, ISRs, and management letters and project team follow-ups were regularly and effectively used to discuss the implementation status of the project. The project team shared with IEG that the PIU prepared periodic progress reports every six months and discussed those reports with the project team in order to monitor implementation. The technical consultants – from a Twinning Partner that included a consortium of experts who provided broad technical support for the project - also provided separate periodic progress reports every six months. The PIU also hired a project economist and ICT experts who provided expertise and supported the preparation of project progress reports by focusing on the project's M&E system and the RF. Following each implementation support mission, the project team provided Aide Memoires, management letters, and other documents, and



conducted focused discussions with the Country Management Unit and the Economic Relations Division at the Ministry of Finance.

### **M&E Quality Rating**

Substantial

## **10. Other Issues**

### **a. Safeguards**

No environmental safeguard or social policies were triggered by this project, since it focused only on capacity building and data collection activities. It was rated Environmental Assessment category C.

### **b. Fiduciary Compliance**

The project utilized the Bank's Systematic Tracking of Exchanges in Procurement (STEP) tool, a planning and tracking system used to monitor procurement activities, identify benchmarks, and measure performance. STEP was also employed to record all contracts, deliverables, invoices, and payments. Activities approved in the Procurement Plan during implementation were executed smoothly without any issues, with competitive bidding being the preferred method for awarding contracts.

Fiduciary risk, initially assessed as high, was later downgraded to moderate due to appropriate training provided to key staff on financial management and procurement. To address identified procurement risks, the PIU hired a procurement consultant and collaborated closely with the Bank's procurement specialist. Additionally, the project engaged a Twinning Partner to provide most of the technical assistance required for project activities.

As a result, the project demonstrated consistent compliance with financial management requirements. This included the regular submission of acceptable financial reports and disclosures, efficient budget management of government and Bank funds, and the timely submission of audit reports. Proactive measures were taken to resolve audit observations, ensuring robust financial oversight throughout the project.

### **c. Unintended impacts (Positive or Negative)**

BBS completed collaboration agreements with several agencies, such as Statistics Korea, the US Census Bureau, the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Office of National Statistics in the United Kingdom, the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, and Oxford Policy Management. Further, the project team supported the preparation of the next NSDS (2024-2030) through extensive national level dialogue, field consultations, and expert review.



**d. Other**

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**11. Ratings**

Ratings	ICR	IEG	Reason for Disagreements/Comment
Outcome	Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	Achievement of Objective 2 was rated Modest under the original outcome targets.
Bank Performance	Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	Project design had several shortcomings.
Quality of M&E	Substantial	Substantial	
Quality of ICR	---	Substantial	

**12. Lessons**

As a lesson, the ICR highlights that to prevent delays in implementation, the costs of a PIU must be properly budgeted, and the PIU should be granted the authority needed to approve activities. This can be accomplished by strategically positioning the PIU within the national statistics office and establishing an internal prior approval mechanism based on agreed workplans and budget.

IEG adds that establishing an enabling environment through legal and regulatory frameworks for the production and dissemination of core official statistics is critical to developing and sustaining statistical capacity for evidence-based policymaking. The enabling environment should align with international standards and support the independent production and use of official statistics.

**13. Assessment Recommended?**

No

**14. Comments on Quality of ICR**

The ICR provided a general and impartial account of the project's design, implementation, and achievement of its objectives, largely adhering to established guidelines. However, in several areas, the ICR could have included more evidence to substantiate its claims. Additional evidence had to be gathered from ISRs, Aide-Memoires, and interviews with the project team. Some data were missing, such as the baseline and target years for the indicators and the actual disbursement amounts for each component. In certain instances, the ICR lacked accuracy. For example, paragraphs 22–23 did not acknowledge the revisions to the outcome targets, and paragraph 79 described the indicators as "very clear," despite the fact that the concept of "core" statistics and surveys was not defined until several years into implementation.



**a. Quality of ICR Rating**  
Substantial