

Enhancing Official Statistics Framework in The Bahamas through the Statistics Act, 2021

The Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (2024-2034)

Georgetown, Guyana



STATISTICS ACT, 2021

AN ACT TO REPEAL THE STATISTICS ACT, 1973; TO ESTABLISH THE BAHAMAS NATIONAL STATISTICAL INSTITUTE AND THE BAHAMAS NATIONAL STATISTICAL INSTITUTE BOARD; TO MAKE PROVISION FOR A NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM TO FACILITATE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF STANDARDS FOR COLLECTING, COMPILING, ANALYSING AND PUBLISHING OFFICIAL STATISTICS AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES

Enacted by the Parliament of The Bahamas

PART I - PRELIMINARY

1. Short title and commencement.

- (1) This Act may be cited as the Statistics Act, 2021.
- (2) This Act shall come into force on a date as the Minister may appoint by notice published in the *Gazette*.

2. Interpretation.

In this Act —

“**anonymized microdata**” means information pertaining to any person in a form that conceals or protects the identity of that person;

“**authorized person**” means an employee of the Institute or any person authorized in writing by the Managing Director to obtain information or data;

“**Board**” means The Bahamas National Statistical Board established under section 7;

- In July 2021, the Commonwealth of The Bahamas transitioned the Department of Statistics into the Bahamas National Statistical Institute (BNSI) through the enactment of the Statistics Act, 2021.
- This Act established a modern governance and institutional framework for official statistics and clearly defined the functions of the newly formed Institute, including:
 - To collect, compile, analyze, and disseminate official statistics for The Bahamas;
 - To promote, develop, and maintain a coordinated National Statistical System;

Three aspect of the Act that helps to deliver strengthening data collection, compilation, analysis and dissemination of official statistics

National Statistical Strategy –

The national framework aims to address data limitations and challenges by integrating statistics into policy and planning, providing a coordinating mechanism for the National Statistical System. Ensuring the optimal use of resources, and developing an action plan to implement the national statistical strategy.

National Statistical Committee –

Its role is collaborate with the Institute to establish the National Statistical Strategy and to advise the Institute on the priorities of the National Statistical System.

Advisory Committees of the Institute –

The Managing Director may appoint advisory committees, comprising members from the inside or outside the Institute, to provide advice on matters related to the Institute's functions or on specific issues that may arise.

Investing and building human and institutional capacity

- A high priority for BNSI is building human capital:
 - Pilot Statistician and Survey Methodologist Cadet Program
 - Work-study program will launch between BNSI and University of Bahamas Fall/Spring 2026/2027
 - With the plan to add one Government Ministry, Department, Agency each year
 - Undergraduate and Graduate Student Internship program will be launch in Summer or Fall 2027
 - Working with scholarship programs (government and private) in the country to offer current employees educational upskilling opportunities in critical needs area.

Financing is needed to upgrade and strengthen national data infrastructure and systems, enabling better integration of data into development planning and enhancing the capacity of statistical offices.

- Modernization of IT systems
- Data governance
- Digital transformation

Overcoming Limitations and Challenges

- Advancing amendments to the Statistics Act, 2021 to strengthen governance and operational effectiveness
 - Developing a robust policy framework for the integration of administrative data, artificial intelligence, and personally identifiable information
 - Ensuring the National Statistical System prioritizes disaggregated data, not only for reporting requirements but also to improve data literacy among the general public and researchers
 - Raising Public Awareness of BNSI - Community Engagement (Public Townhall Meetings), K – 12 Educational Programming, Training of Senior Government Officials and Press, Data Story Telling Workshops