

A large blue clipboard with a silver clip at the top, holding a white sheet of paper. The paper contains a form with various sections, including a checklist, the title 'TASC', and icons for a bar chart and a pie chart. The background is a light blue gradient with abstract shapes.

TASC

Tool for Assessing
Statistical
Capacity

For further information about the Tool for Assessing Statistical Capacity (TASC), please contact the Statistics Team (Innovation in Citizen Services, Institutions for Development [ICS/IFD]):

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The TASC 1.0 is available in English and Spanish and can be downloaded at the [IDB website](#).

The TASC 2.0, which includes mobile data capture, is available in English only and can be downloaded at the [U.S. Census Bureau's TASC website](#).



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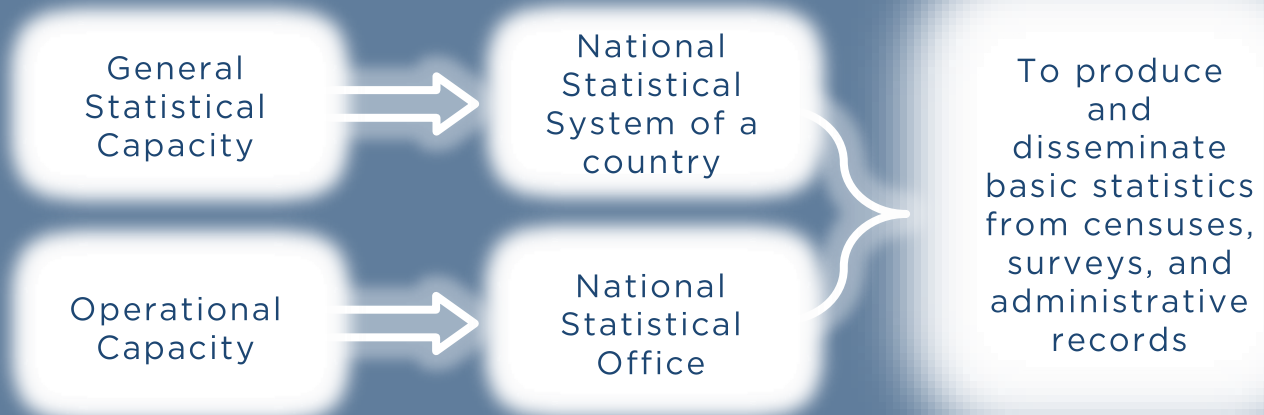
Introduction

The work of the statistics team of the **Innovation in Citizen Services (ICS) Division** of the IDB focuses on **strengthening the statistical capacity of Latin American and the Caribbean (LAC) countries**, which is the capacity to produce and disseminate timely and quality data. Having up-to-date data has a positive impact on decision-making by governmental and non-governmental actors and helps to provide better public services. It also allows the identification of opportunities and impact evaluation of projects, and favors the processes of transparency and accountability with the citizens.

It is important that the National Statistical System (NSS) has a statistical program that considers best practices, international standards, and recommendations, so that there is an adequate statistical infrastructure to produce quality data. The National Statistical Office (NSO), in addition to acting as the coordinating agency of the NSS, must be capable of producing data, conducting censuses and surveys, and integrating administrative records.

One of the main action areas of the ICS statistical team involves the measurement of statistical capacity in the countries of the LAC region through the use of standardized instruments, such as the [Tool for Assessing Statistical Capacity \(TASC\)](#) developed by the United States Census Bureau (USCB) in collaboration with the ICS statistical team.

The TASC is a self-evaluation tool that seeks to assess the statistical capacity of NSOs to conduct censuses and surveys. The USCB developed the core modules of the TASC. The version available through the [IDB website](#) includes an additional section on the NSS.



Objectives

To provide a general quantitative measure of the technical and institutional capacity of a NSS as a whole.

To provide a quantitative measure of the capacity of a NSO to conduct basic statistical operations in censuses, surveys and administrative records.

To help the NSS/NSO, national authorities, and donors identify strengths and weaknesses in statistical capacity, and justify support for specific activities.

To evaluate the effectiveness of a program to strengthen statistical capacity by conducting the TASC before and after its implementation.

To provide a framework of reference for the NSS/NSO with regard to international and regional statistical standards that should be considered and followed.

It is important to note that the TASC is a self-evaluation tool and does not create a ranking or comparison of NSSs and NSOs across countries or regions. However, the TASC can assess changes over time in the same country.

Background

A number of frameworks and tools for institutional capacity measurement have been developed, but few attempt to measure the statistical capacity of the NSS and, more specifically, the NSO. Four predecessors were especially relevant to the development of the TASC:

Data Quality Assessment Framework (DQAF) from the International Monetary Fund (IMF)

PARIS21 Task Team on Statistical Capacity Building


Statistical Capacity Indicator (SCI) from the World Bank

Health Metrics Network (HMN) from the World Health Organization (WHO)

Development and Coverage

The development of the TASC can be broken into **two main phases**:

- 1) The USCB developed an instrument to measure the statistical capacity of a NSO to conduct population censuses and surveys, including all the operations fundamental to those activities.
- 2) The IDB collaborated technically and financially with the Bureau to expand the scope of the instrument to measure the statistical capacity of the NSS.



Country	Year
Argentina	2016
Bahamas	2013
Barbados	2014
Belize	2016
Bolivia	2012
Chile	2014, 2018
Colombia	2018
Costa Rica	2014
Dominican Republic	2014
Ecuador	2014
El Salvador	2012, 2017
Guatemala	2017
Guyana	2017
Haiti	2015 (a)
Honduras	2012
Jamaica	2013
Mexico	2015 (b)
Nicaragua	2015, 2019
Panama	2015
Paraguay	2013, 2018
Peru	2012
Suriname	2013
Trinidad & Tobago	2013
Uruguay	2013

(a) The TASC was applied by an independent consultant without coordinating with the IDB or the USCB. (b) A modified version, with a focus on household surveys, was applied.

In 2012 and 2013, the IDB and the USCB pilot tested the TASC in six countries: Bolivia, El Salvador, Honduras, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay. As of 2018, the tool has been applied in 24 LAC countries.

Content and Implementation

The TASC is structured into **10 different modules**. Each module has subdivisions (see table below) with **245 indicators** related to recommended international statistical standards.

	Module	Subdivisions	Objective
1	Institutional capacity of the NSS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Legal and normative environment * Confidentiality and data protection * Planning and structure of the Organization * Human, technical, and physical capital * Coordination of interested parties 	Measures the institutional capacity of the NSS
2	Census and survey planning and management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Human and physical capital * Methodological soundness and international standards * Quality assurance * Written procedures and documentation 	Measures the operational capacity of the NSO to produce basic statistics
3	Cartography/mapping		
4	Sampling		
5	Questionnaire content and design		
6	Field operations		
7	Data processing		
8	Data analysis and evaluation		
9	Administrative records		
10	Data dissemination		

The TASC is administered in **two major phases**:

- 1) **Individual phase**: Each participant fills out the module or modules in which they have expertise.
- 2) **Group phase**: Participants are divided into groups of three to five participants based on their expertise and have to reach a consensus on each question of a module. Each person may participate in more than one group.

The TASC should be filled out by the highest possible number of participants from the NSS and NSO who have an adequate understanding of the statistical context and are experts in the implementation of statistical operations. **Generally, participants are of the following two types**:

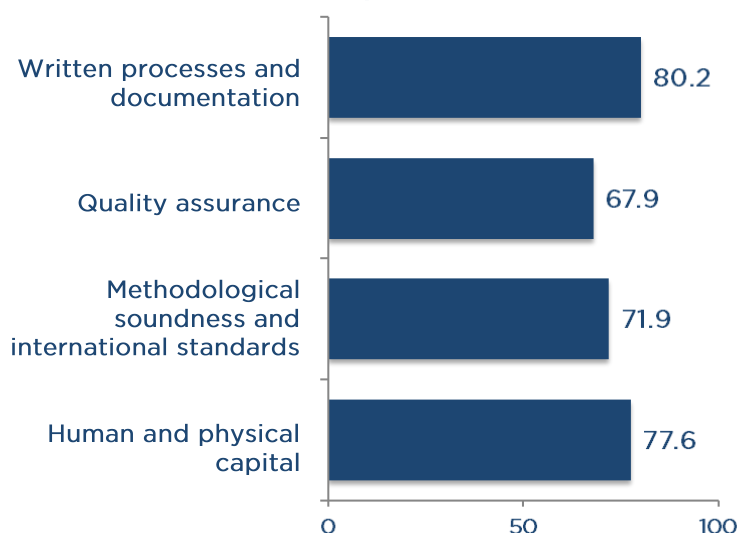
- 1) **Mid-ranking or high-ranking staff from the NSO** who work with censuses, surveys, and administrative records and have several years of experience.
- 2) **Representatives from the NSS** with ample experience in the production and dissemination of statistics in their sector.

Scoring Method, Results, and Applications

Each indicator measures a specific international standard and is scored from 0 to 3 according to its existence, application, or practice. Each respondent fills out the pertinent score on an answer sheet based on a specific description of what each score on the scale means (see table below).

Score Scale	Description
0	Inadequate / does not meet the standard
1	Somewhat adequate / partially meets the standard
2	Adequate / mostly meets the standard
3	Very adequate / meets the standard completely

Field operations



This example illustrates the case of a country with considerable strengths in the following areas:

***Written processes and documentation**, derived from the generation of manuals for coordinators, supervisors and trainers for most censuses and surveys

* **Human and physical capital**, partly attributed to the existence of sufficient territorial offices and a defined and effective hierarchical organization that facilitates field operations.

The results of the TASC can be used for the following:

To obtain a current objective evaluation of basic statistical capacity and identify areas to focus technical assistance and capacity building.

To identify areas of strength where departments or organizations can help each other.

To evaluate the impact of a statistical assistance program, since the TASC can be conducted before and after to assess changes.

To coordinate stakeholder and donor support, including hardware, software, and training.

Recently, the USCB updated to TASC 2.0. The core methodology was unchanged, but a module was added to measure NSO capacity in publicizing censuses and surveys and the cartography and data processing sections were updated to reflect technological advances. A score for mobile data collection, based on responses from multiple modules, was also added. The IDB expects to begin the application of the TASC 2.0 in LAC countries in 2020.

