

# **Management of records at Statistics South Africa: Challenges and Prospects**

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## **Abstract**

In South Africa, government departments are under legislative obligations to adopt a systematic and organised approach to the management of records. This is because sound records management is fundamental for good governance and effective and efficient administration of government units. This article analyses records management trends at Statistics South Africa (StatsSA). Qualitative desktop research was used with key legislative and policy sources, StatsSA documents and international literature. The study revealed that numerous challenges existed in the organisation's records management. These challenges include: creation of the record retention and disposal authority granted by the Archivist; stakeholder relations and engagement; compliance with the National Archives and Records Services of South Africa (NARSSA) Act No. 43 of 1996 as the primary legislation for records and archives management in South Africa; and digitalization and transformation. The article recommends that the resource centre be digitalized by adopting the Millennium and Sierra Integrated Library Systems software for records management, skills development archiving and enhanced stakeholder relations. An effective and efficient records and archives management system promotes good governance, accountability, and transparency.

## **Keywords**

records, archives, records management, digitalization, integrated records management, resource centre, national archives and records services, government departments, Statistics South Africa

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## **Introduction**

Records management is identified as a tool that can lead to good governance in the public sector if managed properly. Although it is also instrumental in the provision of services, records management is neglected by many organisations, including government departments in South Africa (Netshakhuma 2019:193 and Katuu 2015:12). While providing evidence of decisions, actions and interaction between the public and the government, records serve as the primary channel through which government can be held responsible to the public. Hence, sound records management exists within the same regulatory framework which requires accountability, transparency and good governance (Netshakhuma 2019:191-193 and Ngoepe 2004:2). Government departments in all spheres, namely: national, provincial and local, are required to develop, implement and maintain proper records management systems as stipulated in the National Archives and Records Services of South Africa (NARSSA) (Act No. 43 of 1996).

According to Millar (2000), records management includes metadata and datasets, which in the case of Statistics South Africa (Stats SA), includes statistical information in digital or raw format, created, maintained and stored for safekeeping or published for stakeholder consumption. Stats SA is the national statistical service of South Africa and its goal is to produce timely, accurate and official statistics, to advance economic growth, development and democracy. To this end, Stats SA produces official demographic, economic and social censuses and surveys (Stats Sa 2016).

This study analyses the challenges in records and archives management at Stats SA. These are raw records stored in its resource centre. The management of these records is underpinned by the record continuum model developed by Frank Upward (1990). The model underscores four principles of records management namely: create, capture, organize and pluralize. These principles were applied incoherently from the time of record creation through the preservation and utilization thereof as archives (Xiomu 2003:25).

Records management is of essence in an organisation, because it creates and maintains reliable institutional memory (Phiri 2016). Consequently, good governance, accountability and transparency should be promoted (Mullon and Ngoepe 2018). Furthermore, records management enhances the value of the institution, because it aligns with its strategic goals and objectives (Marutha 2019; Netshakhuma 2019).

Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) is mandated to provide quality service, accountability and good governance. The Statistics Act (Act No. 6 of 1999), supported by the Records and Archive Management Policy Framework (RAMPF), outlines that integrated record and archives management enables the department (Stats SA) to produce, disseminate and preserve records associated with

prescribed activities. The Act outlines the role of Stats SA as a provider of statistical information to the public and private sectors (including government departments), for planning, decision-making, monitoring and evaluation of policies. Consequently, as mandated by Section 13 of the NARSSA (Act No 43 of 1996 (amended), and in conjunction with the 2016 Master File Plan, Stats SA should maintain a well-structured record-keeping system and be compliant, upgradable every third year (Statistics South Africa 2016:14; NARSSA 2013a:3).

Despite these constitutional stipulations, Stats SA has a resource centre/library that has not been utilised since 2010. Moreover, no updates have been conducted, and statistical publications dating back to the 1940s are untraceable. As a result of unprecedented high staff turnover, an information gap is prevalent in the provision and location of statistical data/information in the resource centre. Newly appointed information officers find it difficult to locate and dispatch prior records to clients timeously (Statistics South Africa 2014:2). Due to the dormant status of the centre, usage by both internal and external stakeholders has declined.

The article endeavours to address the following questions:

- What does StatsSA Integrated Records Management entail?
- What challenges do records management face at Stats SA?
- What are the practical recommendations enhance records management at Stats SA?

This article utilized a qualitative case study design to address records and archives management challenges in Stats SA and develop an integrated records management programme. The need for Stats SA to align its records management activities to the NARSSA Act is important because it enables the department to uphold its guidelines on records value determination criteria following the Records Management Policy Framework (RAMPF).

This article is structured as follows: introduction; research methodology; theoretical framework on records management; legislative framework governing records management at Stats SA; integrated records management framework at Stats SA; and state of records management in the organisation. Records management and archiving challenges, including recommendations and conclusions are presented in the last sections.

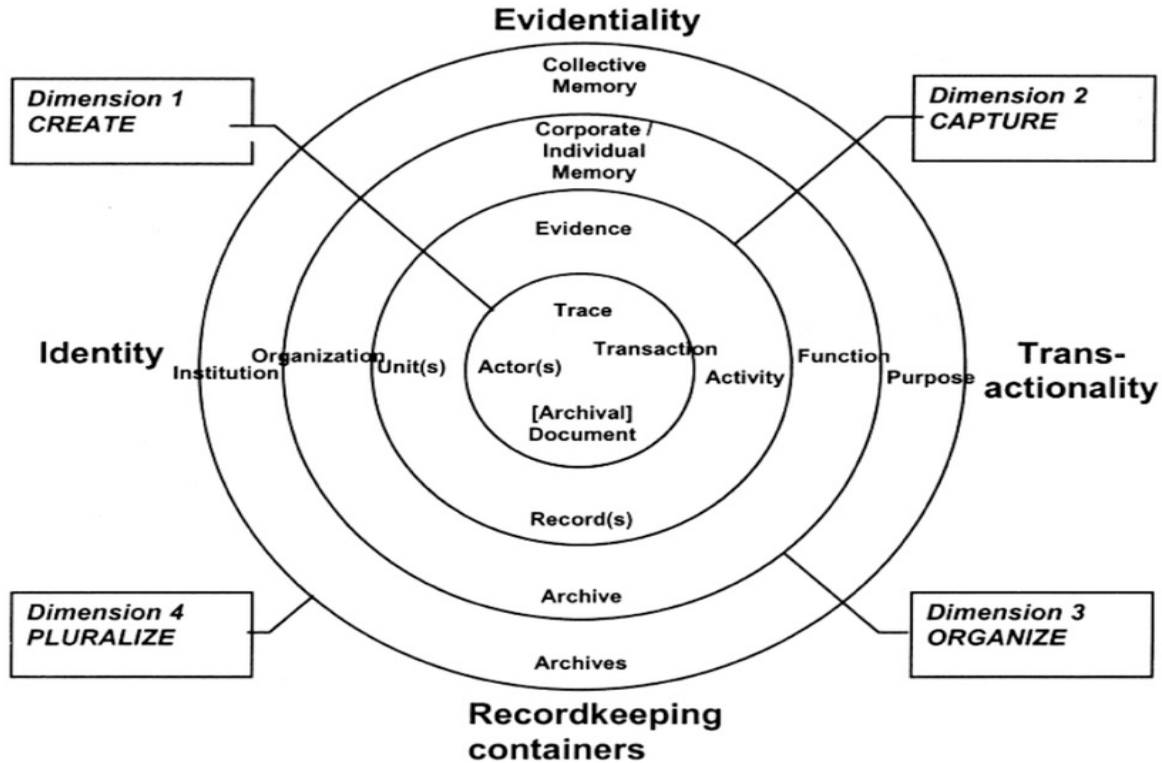
## **Methodology**

The qualitative desktop approach was adopted to conduct document analysis, explore the various components of records management, underlying challenges related to the effective management of records at Stats SA, and comprehend and interpret the underlying phenomenon (Thomas 2003:1). Desktop research strengthens the objectives of producing accurate and reliable findings, especially instances in which information gaps have been identified due to the lack of respondents (Maree

The process of document analysis includes the compilation of data from passages, quotes and extracts. The data was then grouped into major themes related to the main research problem using content analysis (Doolan and Froelicher 2009:13). The analysed documents offered rich, comprehensive information on aspects that could not be captured by other methods of data collection, for example, surveys, which are primarily constricted to scope (Webb and Auriacombe 2006:592). The following key documents were utilised: Stats SA Auditor General reports (2015-2019); StatsSA Records Management Policy, (2016); Service Delivery Improvement Plan (SDIP) and Report (2015-2018); Stats SA Annual Report (2015-2019); and Statistics SA Resource Centre Survey Report (2016).

**Literature review**

The records continuum model, illustrated in Figure 1 below, offers a theoretical basis to manage records and archives. The model was developed by Frank Upward in the 1990s and is defined as a “consistent and coherent regime of management process from the time of the creation of records through the preservation and use of records as archives” (Xiomis 2003:25).



**Figure 1:** The records continuum model

Source: McKemmish (2001)

The continuum model is based on four principles.

The first principle describes a record as a concept which includes its continued value in the form of archives, and accentuates its use for “transactional, evidentiary and memory purposes and unifies approaches to archiving and recordkeeping”, irrespective of the time of existence or creation.

The second principle underscores the “logical rather than the physical entities” regardless of the format, which is either paper or electronic. During this era, electronic records gained popularity and were utilised in both the private and public sectors. Legislation favouring electronic records management was emerging.

The third principle focuses on the “institutionalisation of the role of record managers and archivists as a profession and the need to integrate recordkeeping into business and societal process and purposes”.

The fourth principle reflects on archival science as a discipline and foundation to organise knowledge related to recordkeeping that can be “structured and explored” in such a way that its principal application is for action in the past, present, and future.

Flynn (2001) asserts that the four principles can be summarised into four stages, namely: “Creation or receipt, classification, establishment of retention or disposal schedule and maintenance and use” [by the creator office, inactive storage or archives]. The four interrelated stages form an on-going involvement of both the record managers and archivist’s role in managing recorded information (Xiomis 2003:26). The primary advantage of the record continuum is the inclusivity of the electronic records management system by highlighting the integrated approach to managing records in an organisation and archives (Museumbe 2016).

Gilliland-Swetland (2000:15) considers the records continuum model as an approach that maintains the relationship between records managers and archivists from beginning to the end of the records' lifespan. This view is supported by the relationship between the NARSSA and the government departments, which is required to maintain and manage records through the records manager and archivist from the beginning to its lifespan. The first dimension is associated with the creation of records and receipt by relevant components or units. Publishing statistical publications after gathering data is the initial stage of creating and forwarding it to the resource centre at Stats SA. The second dimension underscores the capture of records according to series or a filing system, which in the case of Stats SA, the classification system refers to the master file plan using records series assigned to the organisation by the archivist at the NARSSA. The third dimension relates to the series, which is a tool that determines the retention and disposal of records in the South African public service. NARSSA is required to involve the archivist to

determine the permanency of the records which forms part of the memory of the Stats SA. The fourth dimension describes the preservation of records, which explains the transaction between the organisation and the archivist and the use thereof for future reference and research.

In summary, the four dimensions highlight the link between the institutional objectives, records management and organisational input and output and the continuity of the utilisation of records in an organisation. Proper records management plays a significant role in an organisation and ensures continuity, consistency, accountability to the current and future of the institution and reflects its “past actions and decisions” (Chiwanza and Mutongi 2016:67).

Stats SA is mandated to produce, compile and disseminate statistical information to stakeholders timeously for various uses. Similar to other public institutions, for example, health and education, which rely primarily on raw secondary data archives, it is important to create, use, maintain, preserve and manage records according to the legislative requirements of the NARSSA Act, which governs the public service records management system.

Marutha (2011) and Phiri (2016) affirm that records management is the essence of an organisation, because it creates and maintains reliable institutional memories. Mullon and Ngoepe (2018) and Mukred, Yusof, Alotaibi, Asma and Fauzi (2019) maintain that records management promotes good governance, accountability and transparency, while Marutha (2019) and Netshakhuma (2019) hold that records management enhances the value of an institution because it aligns its strategic goals and objectives.

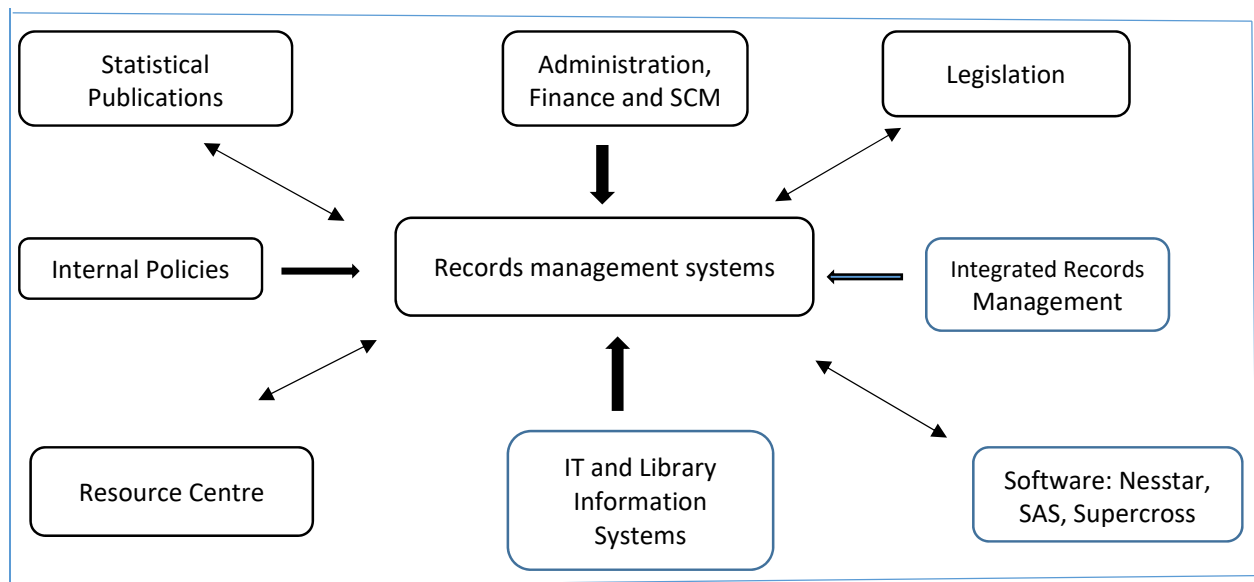
### **Stats SA Records Management Framework**

Records management in the public sector defines the core function of an organisation/institution, documenting the work of public and private authorities and support operations (Smith 2007:1). Records in developing countries institutions have deteriorated due to neglect of their records management systems (Mullon and Ngoepe 2018). The lack of sound records and archives management systems impedes development objectives, good governance, ethics, and accountability, and affects service delivery (Mullon and Ngoepe 2018). Records is evidence of the organisation’s operational activities, an extension of human memory and a reflection of the organisational strategic, operational and work plan (Finell 2011:2; Netshakhuma 2019).

Integrated records management (IRM) is required for the smooth functioning of records management processes in the public sector, for example, departments of education and health, which rely primarily on secondary data archives for their daily operations. IRM, according to Millar (2000:20), is a systematic programme used to organise and control records. The IRM system comprises of public and

private stakeholders' interrelatedness as well as an organisation's legislation and policies to avail records and simultaneously maintain the these and archives in an open, smart and functional/ continuous format.

In Stats SA, IRM is essential to promote intergovernmental and stakeholder relations because statistical information is documented in publications, reports, maps and other forms of communication, monitoring and evaluation of service delivery. Statistical publications are produced monthly, quarterly, annually and periodically at a cost for access by to the public. Stats SA is required to create public awareness of the publications by ensuring the distribution of statistics through various forms of media and communication. The conceptual framework of records management at Stats SA is illustrated in Figure 2 below.



**Figure 2:** Stats SA Records management framework

Source: Authors compilation from Stats SA documents

According to Duranti and MacNeil (1996:48), records management systems are information systems which capture, maintain and provide access to records for future use. These are linked to policies, procedures, roles and responsibilities in the organisation for long-term preservation of records. The Stats SA records management system comprises of the administration, finance and SCM systems, which are supported by the records management legislative prescripts, internal policies and procedures.

The resource centre merged with the User Information Services unit under the Statistical Publication Services division (incorporated under the Stakeholder Relations and Marketing division). It is used to store non-electronic statistical records and publications. The software currently used at Stats SA (Nesstar, SAS, and SuperCross) is inadequate to manage cataloguing, acquisition, e-resources, circulation and loaning of materials because of a lack of daily operations at the resource centre.

The software recommended by the IT Department is Millennium and Sierra Integrated Library Systems (Stats SA 2016). According to Fu and Fitzgerald (2018), Sierra is considered a next-generation integrated library system (ILS) with workflows and functionality and capacity to facilitate collaboration between libraries and to engage users. The Millennium system provides e-resources, e-journals, Web access control and management, e-teaching, learning, renewal as well as holding of material and providing a pin to access all the services in the library while providing infrastructure for research and library administration and information management (Swanepoel and Lessing 2010). The resource centre serves as a marketing tool to provide information management and improve the utilisation and access to internal and external stakeholders (Lamb, Hair, McDaniel, Boshoff, Tereblance, Elliott and Klopper 2010:5).

### **Challenges to records management in Stats SA**

Stats SA has a role to produce reliable statistical data/information. The data is documented to communicate further, used and preserved for historical value for reference purposes, comparison and research. The availability of data sets through ICT is also important as South Africa embraces the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) weaving into the global e-setup.

The primary challenges facing records management at Stats SA is based on four key perspectives, namely: Firstly, creation of the record retention and disposal authority granted by the Archivist. Secondly, stakeholder relations and engagement. Thirdly, compliance with the NARSSA Act as the legislative and regulatory body for records and archives management in South Africa. Finally, digitalization and transformation.

### ***The relationship between Stats SA and the National Archives and Records Services***

NARSSA is responsible to establish a professional relationship with all government departments. According to the NARSSA Act, 1999, government departments must oversee the accessibility and sound management of records, both electronic and paper-based. According to the Records Management Policy Manual (2007), produced by the Department of Arts and Culture, records contain memories and decisions made by the government. Both of these are meant to be maintained and protected for centuries to come.

The Records Management Policy (2016) at Stats SA does not detail statistical publications and how these should be managed as outlined according to the classification system. The policy focuses primarily on administrative records and excludes statistical publications. Ngoepe and Van der Walt (2009:116) postulate that although all government departments in South African are obliged by the legislation to weave records into “systematic and organised” records management systems, limited attention is paid



to stipulated rules, laws and requirements. These assertions are supported by the Auditor-General's reports of 2013-18 detailing the failure of most local, provincial and national governments to comply with the records management legislation. Section 13 (2).(b) (i) of the NARSSA Act stipulates the responsibility of the archivist to ensure the implementation of a records classification system in all government departments. This includes facilitating access to records. Ngoepe and Van der Walt (2010:94) describe the records classification system as a file plan which provides easy access to records in an organisation.

The asset register, in Stats SA, has not been updated since 2010. Hence, users are unable to access information related to the availability and location of publications (Stats SA 2013:6). Statistical publications are considered an organisations asset because they are produced according to its strategic objectives and procured in conformance with the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA), Treasury Framework and other public finance-related regulations. The classification systems have not been implemented for proper reconciliation, according to Stats SA, 2013.

According to Section 13 (4) of the NARSSA Act, 1996 and the Records Management Policy Manual (2007), it is required to communicate policy while providing information on the specific requirements and conditions for the management of all formats (paper-based and electronic) in an integrated manner.

There appears to be a poor working link between NARSSA and Stats SA considering the gap between updating the organisational File Plan and the internal record management policy. Chinyemba and Ngulube (2005:2) observed that proper records management involves the establishment of systematic controls of every stage of the records management processes.

Most South African government departments are faced with challenges which range from, *inter alia*, the lack of records management toolkits. The sub-directorates in most departments lack proper records management project planning, thus resulting in probable loss and displacement of records and information (Ngoepe 2016:342).

Ngoepe (2016:338) explains that the NARSSA Act, as a driver of records and archival management systems in South African government bodies, should consider customising each department according to its strategic goals and objectives to address the challenges they face related to records and archives management.

### ***The retention period according to the legislation***

According to Section 7 (a) of the NARSSA Act, 1999, inactive records can be kept for a period of 7 to 20 years depending on the records manager's findings as per organisational utilisation thereof. According to the internal policy, no records can be destroyed, erased or disposed of without written

authorisation from the Archivist. All the records with archival value must be retained in the organisation for 20 years before disposal. According to the A7 and A20 directives prescribed by the NARSSA Act of 1999, the retention years in which the records, including publications, kept in the resource centre is 20 years. As mentioned previously, the disposal of records implies physically destroying the documents, moving records of historical value to the institutional repository or National Archives or sending the records to offsite storage.

Stats SA has statistical records which date from 1940. Several were produced internally while others were acquired from various statistical institutions globally. There is a need to assess the documents at the resource centre by conducting an asset audit, because some have reached or exceeded the retention period.

### ***Stakeholder relations and engagement***

The role of Stats SA includes enabling, facilitating and maintaining the relationship between the government and its stakeholders on a long-term basis. According to Hope (2001:120), the New Public Management (NPM) theory offers a lesson and analysis for the public service in Africa and the global village by considering how the effectiveness of the service provided by government creates a relationship between itself and the stakeholders [internal and external]. The public is considered the primary beneficiary of the government and is expected to play an important role in understanding the services the departments provide.

Instead of focusing on controlling bureaucracies and delivering services, the government responds to the needs of ordinary citizens while creating public value for public money by linking the political and administrative relationships (Denhardt and Denhardt 2000 in Hope 2001:150). To enhance the relationship between the government and the public, the South African “Batho Pele principles” were introduced to enhance quality and accessibility of public services while providing a framework for decision-making relating to the public service in South Africa.

As noted in the Stats SA, Service Delivery Improvement Plan (2015-19), the first objective highlights a need to plan, improve and implement stakeholder engagement and relations at a lower level of the geographic areas by Stats SA. In this instance, the Batho Pele principles are reflected on by escalating the eight principles, namely: consultation, service standards, access, courtesy, information, openness and transparency, redress and value for money. Strategy, leadership, skills relevant to the organisation, digital culture and user focus are factors which shape the digital transformation and a sign of digital maturity as explained by Eggers and Bellman (2015: 4). The second objective is to close the gap between the availability of data produced by Stats SA and data user’s requests for previous and current

information. Through statistical publications produced by Stats SA, statistics are simplified into socio-economic explanations to stakeholders.

### ***Understaffing***

Stats SA, like any government department, is affected by the National Treasury announcement to freeze vacant posts or consider these as non-vacant. The latter was implemented from April 2018 as a measure to minimise costs, citing lower revenue collection, as reported by the South African Government News Agency 2016. This has led to budget cuts and impeded Stats SA's ability to fill several positions, including records management-related positions. However, no scheduled activity was channelled on the Work Plan for 2017/18 (2018:16), according to Stats SA Annual Report (2017/18).

Positions which were filled were statistically related (considered as critical occupations) and reserved primarily for senior management services as highlighted in the Stats SA Annual Report (2017/18). The vacancy rate for the organisation was 13.9% in the 2017/8 financial year, compared to 11% in the 2016/7 financial year, as recorded in the Annual Reports 2016/7 and 2017/8.

The resource centre falls under the Statistical Collection and Outreach cluster. In the Annual Report 2016/17, of the 1351 advertised position, 1223 were filled while 128 remained vacant. None of the filled positions were related to records, archives and information management, which reflects limited skills in records management services at Stats SA.

There is a need to appoint a records manager to manage all records and archives at Stats SA and to liaise directly with the Archivist at the NARS to facilitate records management at a senior management level, as required by the NARSSA Act. Currently, this position is at middle management level and focuses only on administrative records management, and not on statistical publications or records.

### ***Records management training and skills development***

To manage digitisation, sustainable human resources capacity, skills development and infrastructure is essential. A strategic plan and budget must be implemented to manage training in an organisation. According to Stats SA's Individual Performance Management Policy (2003:4), training, development and support for officials is required to reach the agreed objectives to conform with the Personal Development Plan as per the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA).

According to clause 6.3.2 of the Individual Performance Management Policy (2003), the organisation's human resource management and finance components is required to provide advice on the training and development actions identified in the Personnel Development Plan.

Further training and skills development have been paused due to budget cuts implemented by the National Treasury. However, eleven staff members from the Corporate Service cluster received training

through skills programmes and short courses to facilitate and enhance the administration of records management (Stats SA Annual Report 2016/17).

The Annual Report 2016/17 on skills and formal qualifications revealed that the organisation concentrates primarily on statistical-related training, for example, the Centre for Regional and Urban Innovation and Statistical Exploration (CRUISE), which is offered to senior managers, middle managers and potential senior and middle managers.

### ***Digitisation of the resource centre***

Digitisation programmes in South Africa's public service seek to improve access to information, economic growth and opportunities, justice and basic human rights. The Digitisation Strategy of 2013 was introduced by the Department of Arts and Culture to enable the NARSSA to embrace information and technology and other record management systems in support of public service priorities to deliver service to the public. Enhancement of service delivery requires ICT use in government, according to Dassah in Thornhill, van Dijk and Ille (2016:343), while the National Development Plan: Vision 2030 requires the government to use ICT to improve service delivery and add public value to the service.

The NARSSA has failed to lead the digitisation of projects in government departments (Digitisation Strategy 2013:7). Consequently, its role is limited due to the lack of skills, funds and IT infrastructure.

The South African Digitisation Strategy 2013 concurs with the Malaysian Information and Documentation Policy (Azim *et al* 2018), the digitisation of records increases accessibility to more than one user, better integration with the organisations' information and records systems, and can serve as a backup system during a disaster. Furthermore, digitisation increases productivity in an organisation while it could also be a cost and space-saving exercise.

By digitising statistical publications, Stats SA will provide stakeholders with easier access to information because of its availability electronically and online. The resource centre will serve as the organisation's collection building where the culture of reading and research can be enhanced. Most publications such as releases and reports are digitised. In the case of the resource centre, Stats SA will be required to digitise most records and publications to create an internal archive or repository to preserve some of the records for access and reference. Converting paper-based records to digital format is considered a way of preserving records for further use in a virtual form (Azim, Yatin, Jensonray and Mansor 2018:172).

According to Stats SA Annual Report (2017), it is advanced with ITC-related infrastructure and has well-backed up servers, statistical programmes and software such as SuperCross, SuperWeb, SAS and Nesstar. Currently, SuperCross user training is offered to stakeholders and a refresher course to internal

staff members (Stats SA Annual Report 2018). The organisation is moving from a paper and pencil interviewing method (PAPI) to a computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) one for surveys and Census 2021.

## **Conclusions**

Effective records management promotes accountability, transparency, and social coherence. Management of records enhances the role of government as the primary provider of services and the ability to report to the public. The article disclosed the benefits of the statistical resources centre in the archiving and management of statistical records. Furthermore, it recommended developing and improving integrated records management in Stats SA. Consequently, recommendations were provided of how integrated records management can benefit the organisation, its stakeholders as well as the users of statistical data. The challenges were discussed from four key perspectives: Firstly, the creation of the record retention and disposal authority granted by the Archivist. Secondly, stakeholder relations and engagement. Thirdly, compliance with the NARSSA Act as the legislative and regulatory body for records and archives management in South Africa. Finally, digitalisation and transformation. We, therefore, recommend improved relations between Stats SA and NARSSA, digitalisation of the records management system, organisational structure renewal as well as skills development and training within the organisation.

## **Recommendations**

The promulgation of the NARSSA Act was a direct response to the need for reform of the way in which the public service records and archives is managed and the need to improve and promote inclusive public participation in service delivery. For Stats SA to revive its resource centre, enhanced information communication technology in the management of statistical publications is essential. The emphasis on the use of ICT in records management enables access to records as well as enhance service delivery and increase accountability (Musembe 2016:18). Following the identification of records and archives management challenges faced in Stats SA, a list of practical recommendations is provided below.

### ***Improved relationship between Stats SA and the NARSSA***

NARSSA is a regulatory, advisory body and custodian of records and archives in the South African public service is required to enforce the relationship with Stats SA to ensure compliance by regulating, enhancing and communicating with all government departments to create a trend of monitoring records from creation to disposal and attach value thereto. The relationship between government institutions and NARSSA is vital because it symbolises compliance with legislation and regulations. This is through the records management compliance test instituted by NARSSA. No government institution should exist

without the relationship. In the process of developing a relationship, Stats SA is required to develop a records management policy that is inclusive of statistical publications to improve the resource centre by setting goals and objectives from the establishment, maintenance and utilisation of statistical records to disseminate formally and in a classified manner as stipulated per NARSSA regulations.

### ***Digitisation***

According to De la Porte and Higgs (2019), the South African public service is gradually in the process of digitising records. Digitisation of printed material in the resource centre will align the existing electronic records management system to encourage day visits and utilise publications which are continued to be produced while creating space and saving costs. Furthermore, Digitisation Strategy was developed to comply with the National Policy on Digitisation of Heritage Resources and requires custodian institutions to create a strategy to align digitisation to the National Policy Framework.

Electronic records management in the public service can be incorporated using records management principles which apply to structured and unstructured records. Structured records include a data warehouse and geographic information system (GIS) in the form of scanned and digitised images. According to NARSSA (2007:29), the unstructured records can be kept within the organisation's record-keeping system or outside. The use of electronic records management application such as the SIERA is essential to enable the resource centre to function. Moreover, it and can be managed better with an integrated document and records management system. The system improves the way statistical data/information is stored, linking software to the one recommended by the NARSSA to assist the public to comprehend the statistical environment.

### ***Organisational structure renewal***

The organisational structure must be aligned such that it enhances service delivery following strategic and budgetary planning. The organisational structure in any government institution is aligned to the strategic goals and objectives and serves a purpose to guide the developmental purpose of each institution. The resource centre has for several decades provided services to internal and external stakeholders when placed in clusters and divisions, for example, Statistical Publication Services and Stakeholder Relations and Marketing. The separation of the two into different divisions disconnected the relationship resulting to its dysfunctionality. It is recommended that both components be placed under the organisation's Corporate Communications division to improve stakeholder relations and provide statistical data/information directly to internal and external stakeholders.

### ***Skills development and training within the organisation***

Maintaining the relationship with NARSSA is important to identify and develop skills within government institutions by collaborating with accredited organisations. It is recommended that the position of the middle manager responsible for records administration be upgraded to improve communication and enhance the relationship between the NARSSA and Stats SA.

The Archivist, based in the NARSSA, is required to build a firm relationship with the Records Manager and work together to enhance records management in the public service. There is a need to employ qualified librarians and information officers in the resource centre and understand the statistics and statistical environment to restore the confidence of internal and external stakeholders as well as reduce the response time for enquiries and requests for statistical data/information.

Enhanced records management skills and training in the organisation is possible through collaboration with accredited bodies which provide recognised and accredited skills development and training such as NARSSA, Auditor-General SA, International Records Management Trust (IRMT), International Council on Archives (ICA) and/or private companies. Furthermore, empowerment of officials through seminars and conferences related to records management and technologies is essential to broaden their understanding of this environment, sensitise officials of the role of records and record management in the public service, and familiarise them with the relevant legislation related to records and archives management.

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