

STATISTICS ACROSS BORDERS

International statistical co-operation



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Dear readers,

One of the highlights of international statistical co-operation in the first three quarters of 2014 has been the closing event of the twinning project with the State Statistical Office (SSO) of Macedonia. In a two-day series of activities attended by the head of the SSO, Blagica Novkovska, and Roderich Egeler, head of the Federal Statistical Office of Germany, the relevant Macedonian heads of the project components and many experts of the EU partners presented the project results to the public. In the past two years, the Macedonian SSO has made great efforts to achieve all project goals. National accounts have been made more consistent with European standards. Also, a number of pilot surveys were conducted in the project, which are going to become regular surveys in Macedonia. In addition, the colleagues have achieved significant improvements in the data quality and IT components.

While the EU twinning project with the Macedonian partners is finished, preparatory work is under way for the closing events of the projects with the Turkish and the Mongolian statistical office, which are coming to an end, too.

The Federal Statistical Office is in high demand as a partner not only in large-scale projects. This is shown by the reports on the visits of expert delegations from Iraq, Abu Dhabi and Taiwan to Wiesbaden.

This edition covers the period from the beginning of the year to the end of August 2014.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue.

The editors

Ringo Raupach

Christine Kronz

Volker Gutekunst

Should you not yet receive our electronic publication regularly and be interested please send a request to cooperation@destatis.de.

Twinning project with the State Statistical Office of the Republic of Macedonia successfully completed



After the project had run for a total of two years, the implementation phase of the twinning project with the State Statistical Office (SSO) of the Republic of Macedonia ended on 17 August. At the eighth and last steering committee meeting held on 13 August 2014 in Skopje, the Macedonian colleagues and the representative of the EU delegation again underlined the very positive results of the co-operation.

During the project, 21 German and 40 international short-term experts conducted a total of 83 consulting missions in Skopje and organised six study visits to the Federal Statistical Office or to the partner offices in Denmark (junior partner), the Czech Republic and Bulgaria. Another EU partner supporting the project was the French statistical office INSEE.

On 1 July 2014, the official closing conference of the project was held in Skopje. The event was hosted by the EU delegation in Macedonia. The two heads of office, Blagica Novkovska (SSO) and Roderich Egeler (Federal Statistical Office), jointly presented the project results to the interested public. The closing conference was also attended by representatives of the project partners from Denmark, Bulgaria, France and the Czech Republic and the heads of the statistical offices of Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro.

The previous day, EU experts and their Macedonian colleagues had jointly presented the detailed project results in their relevant fields of responsibility in a total of six sessions. The sessions covered data quality, geographical information systems, national accounts, business statistics, and social statistics as well as a seminar on using online data collection tools.

The project started in August 2012 when the German Resident Twinning Adviser, Dr. Bernd Richter, from the Land Statistical Office of the Freistaat Sachsen, was seconded. He co-ordinated the project activities in Macedonia and was the first contact person for the EU experts and the Macedonian colleagues.

Macedonia

The consulting activities covered a total of four project components: national accounts, sector statistics, data quality and geographical information systems, and information technology.

A total of 35 activities have been performed in 2014:

Area	Expert missions	Study visits
Labour force survey	1	–
Foreign trade prices	2	–
Confidentiality	2	–
Health accounts	3	–
Geographical information systems	1	1
IT-online data collection	2	–
IT-backup management	2	1
Cultural statistics	1	–
Agriculture and forestry	2	–
Passenger transport statistics	1	–
Data quality	2	1
Sampling methods	1	–
Environmental statistics	2	–
National accounts-indicators	4	–
Household budget survey	–	1
Project management	5	–

Project with Mongolia



The project on Strengthening the National Statistical System of Mongolia has entered its final stage and will be completed in late 2014. As almost all activities planned had already been carried out, only three expert missions to Ulan Bator were undertaken by the project partners in the reference period.

An expert of the Federal Statistical Office's Division "Industry, Construction, Energy" visited Mongolia from 20 to 24 January 2014 for this year's first mission on classifications in the economic sector. The mission focused on changing over from version 3.1 of the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC) to ISIC 4 and on the back-calculation of the relevant statistical data. ISIC 4 is expected to be applied in Mongolia from January 2015.

Another mission undertaken by a colleague from the Norwegian statistical office referred to questions of environmental-economic accounting. At the beginning of the mission, the situation of environmental statistics was reviewed and the status of environmental-economic accounting assessed. The expert provided methodical and practical advice on the further development of the relevant statistics and accounts and also recommendations for the highly important co-operation with competent international bodies. Her mission was concluded by a training session given to staff of the relevant statistical units.

In March, two colleagues from the Korean statistical office visited Mongolia. The expert mission focused on technical questions of statistical registers and, in particular, the business register. Based on the software architecture in place, the experts made recommendations for refining the management system in order to automate, to the extent possible, the procedures required for regular updating. Here safety aspects and the co-operation between the central office and the regional statistical offices in Mongolia play an important role.

Project co-ordination meeting in Mongolia

On 9 and 10 July 2014, the eighth and last project co-ordination meeting in the context of the World Bank project took place in Mongolia. President Roderich Egeler met the Chairman of the Mongolian statistical office and representatives of the World Bank. They discussed the results and progress achieved during the preceding six months. The activities agreed in the work plan for the individual components of the World Bank project were carried out as scheduled. Now the project is drawing to a close. Both, the German and the Mongolian sides and the World Bank, expressed their high satisfaction with co-operation in the framework of the consortium, the success achieved in the project period and the progress observed as a result of the expert missions. Furthermore, the detailed content of the project's Final Conference on 28 October 2014 was adopted. A workshop on supply and use tables funded by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Federal Enterprise for International Cooperation, GIZ) will be held parallel to the conference in Ulan Bator. At this workshop, a German expert will present the project targets achieved in the area of national accounting. The two-day event is designed for representatives of various Mongolian ministries. As a result of the positive experiences gained during the project activities, the Mongolian statistical office expressed its wish to continue its co-operation with the Federal Statistical Office on a bilateral basis after the conclusion of the World Bank project in late 2014.

Overview of project activities

January 2014		
Expert mission: Classifications and standards	Ulan Bator	19 – 26
February 2014		
Expert mission: Environmental-economic Accounting	Ulan Bator	10 – 14
March 2014		
Expert mission: Statistical registers	Ulan Bator	12 – 14
July 2014		
Project co-ordination meeting	Ulan Bator	9 – 10

Half way through the co-operation project with the statistical office of Kazakhstan



In the second year of the World Bank funded project, the co-operation between the statistical office of Kazakhstan and the Federal Statistical Office, heading the consortium in the KAZSTAT project, has been strengthened and intensified. To implement the work plan, more than 100 consulting activities are scheduled for this year. In the first eight months, 55 individual activities were implemented. A similar number of activities is expected to follow in the remaining four months of 2014. From October 2012 to August 2014, a total of 164 expert missions to Kazakhstan and study visits to the partner countries have successfully been performed.

With the second High Level Planning Meeting (HLP), chaired by the two heads of office, Roderich Egeler and Alikhan Smailov, this form of half-yearly co-ordination meetings has become established in the project. These meetings are scheduled to take place alternately in Germany and Kazakhstan. This time, President Egeler stayed in Astana from 7 to 9 April to discuss the progress made in the project and other issues of co-operation with his Kazakh colleague, Alikhan Smailov. The discussions focused on how the project had developed and how successful implementation can be ensured also for the future. The next meeting is scheduled for October 2014 in Bonn.

In the last few months, especially the German side focused on consulting missions to Kazakhstan. While last year study visits were held in many project components, allowing the Kazakh colleagues to get acquainted with the German statistical system and the German staff involved in the production, a larger number of concrete consulting missions were then held in Kazakhstan. They covered a wide range of subjects. To optimally meet the existing need for consultation, several new international partners have been recruited for the project. Examples are study visits of Kazakh colleagues to the statistical offices of France (INSEE) and Italy (ISTAT). While the French colleagues welcomed the Kazakh experts to Paris on industrial statistics, the study visit to Rome focused on the preparation of a survey on domestic violence in Kazakhstan.

In August 2014, the entire executive in Kazakhstan was restructured. Among other things, the government agencies were transformed. The Agency on Statistics has now become the Committee on Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan as part of the Ministry of National Economy of Kazakhstan. It will become clear in the course of the project whether this development will have an impact on the further project implementation.

In June, the progress made in project implementation was presented at the eighth meeting of the German-Kazakh Intergovernmental Working Group on Business and Trade. The Working Group meetings are chaired by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy and the Ministry of Industry and New Technologies of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The following table shows the topics of the activities held from January to August 2014:

Area	Expert missions	Study visits
Labour market and labour costs ..	4	–
Education statistics	1	1
Energy	1	1
Gender statistics	–	1
Industrial statistics	2	1
Information technology (IT)	2	4
Agricultural statistics	–	3
Migration statistics	–	1
Human resources management ...	1	1
Prices	1	2
Quality management	2	1
Registers	–	3
Sampling methodology	1	1

Kazakhstan

Area	Expert missions	Study visits
Tourism statistics	1	–
Environmental statistics	–	1
National accounts	6	3
Household budget surveys	1	–
Science and innovation statistics	1	–



Press briefing at the second HLPM in Astana. From left to right: Interpreter, Roderich Egeler, Alikhan Smailov, Mustafa Dinc (World Bank), interpreter



Group photo of the HLPM participants in Astana

Interview with Roland Günther ¹, expert in the Kazakhstan project



Mr. Günther, you took on a consulting mission to Kazakhstan as an expert for Destatis. Did you ever consider going so far away for a teaching-mission?

When I have started working for Destatis years ago, of course not. But within time it became evident that our co-operation projects started to take place in a wider range. Globalization didn't stop here, so why not? Before travelling, I didn't have much of an idea about this country and its people. But I brought so many interesting and beautiful impressions back home that I would even consider a private visit for holidays in Kazakhstan now.

What is your specialization and what was the main target of your teaching in this mission? How many people did attend your seminars?

At Destatis, I'm responsible for labour cost surveys. This kind of statistics is often used to compare economic/business locations and ranks of economic power between countries. There are international recommendations, which state that every country should have such a survey done. Germany has a lot of experience in that field, because we have been conducting those surveys since 1955. The idea of this expert visit was to support the Kazakh colleagues to adapt this survey, to their needs and still fulfill the international standards. Therefore

we went through a long questionnaire, discussed and compared and then decided together, which parts would have to be adjusted. This took us, two German and at least three Kazakh colleagues, one week.

Have you ever been abroad as an expert for Destatis before?

Yes of course, for most of the Heads of Section there is no way not being sent on a mission at some point. I went to Bulgaria and China before.

What kind of project missions were those?

They were also on labour cost surveys and the adaption of the international standards at the national practical level. Bulgaria was back then eager to fulfill the EU-Standards as fast as possible. As for China it was more a comparing of methods in order to check what could be improved.

How was your impression of this co-operation during your stay in Kazakhstan?

Really positive. The Kazakh colleagues are interested and determined (to a high degree). They were very well-prepared and asked a lot and profound questions. It was not only that they challenged us with their questions; we even took some of the unresolved issues within the discussions back home to think about them further. All this took place in a very friendly atmosphere, so we enjoyed it a lot.

- 1 Roland Günther is Head of the Section “Structure of earnings survey, Labour Cost Survey” in the Federal Statistical Office.

President of the Federal Statistical Office visits China and beginning of consulting activities on employment statistics



From 5 to 8 July, the President of the Federal Statistical Office, Roderich Egeler, visited the National Bureau of Statistics of China (NBS) on the invitation of Ma Jiantang, Commissioner of the NBS, to co-ordinate the offices' strategic co-operation and future aspects of working together on a bilateral basis. Deepening strategic co-operation at the international level is a central objective of the renewed co-operation agreement signed by the two statistical offices in November 2012. The Chinese side is especially interested in an exchange on Big Data.

The current phase of bilateral co-operation between the Federal Statistical Office and the National Bureau of Statistics of China focuses on both employment and cost structure statistics. In March 2014, the consulting activities on employment statistics started with a mission in Beijing and in the regional statistical office of the Yunnan province in Kunming. Consulting activities on employment statistics were already part of the 2009 – 2012 round of co-operation. The first phase of co-operation led to verifiable improvements in the Chinese labour market statistics. The objective of the current project phase is a more detailed discussion of technical and methodical issues and also qualitative aspects. This project gives us the chance to provide the Chinese colleagues with a greater insight into the modes of operation of German and European statistics and to contribute to a worldwide harmonisation of statistical methods and procedures.

Overview of project activities

		March 2014
Expert mission on employment statistics	Beijing	10 – 14
		July 2014
Visit of President Egeler	Beijing/Xian	7 – 8
		August 2014
Price statistics	Düsseldorf	18



Roderich Egeler and Destatis representatives visiting Weiyang District Office in Xian

President of the Federal Statistical Office visits the Turkish Statistical Institute



On 28 and 29 April 2014, the President of the Federal Statistical Office, Roderich Egeler, visited the Turkish Statistical Institute (Turkstat) in Ankara. President Roderich Egeler and Birol Aydemir, President of Turkstat, signed a bilateral agreement on co-operation between the two offices, which was the main result of the visit.

Turkstat and the Federal Statistical Office have been working together very closely for 12 years. The current EU funded USST3 co-operation project (Upgrading the Statistical System of Turkey) is the third large-scale project in the framework of which the Federal Statistical Office assists its Turkish partners by sending short-term experts and organising study visits to Germany. In recent years, German statisticians have organised not less than 47 study visits for their Turkish colleagues, involving a wide range of specialised units.

During the above visit President Roderich Egeler, Sibylle von Oppeln-Bronikowski (Head of the Department “Strategy and Planning, International Relations, Research and Communication”) and Ringo Raupach as the person responsible for co-operation with Turkey discussed the current state of co-operation. Turkstat does not only receive assistance; instead it has become an important project partner that sends experts to counsel Kazakh colleagues in the context of the KAZSTAT project with the Kazakh statistical office (see also article on page 10).

Another visible sign of close co-operation between the two offices is the exchange of trainees. In the past few years, Turkstat staff members have undertaken traineeships of up to six months at the Federal Statistical Office. To further enhance the conditions for trainees in the future, the heads of the two statistical offices signed a framework agreement during President Roderich Egeler’s stay in Ankara.

Another point on the agenda was a visit to the regional statistical office in Nevşehir. There the colleagues presented the nearly completed new training centre of the Turkish statistical system where in the future training courses

will be organised for statisticians from the central and regional offices. For this purpose, the centre is equipped with modern conference and meeting rooms and appropriate accommodation facilities.



President of the Federal Statistical Office visits Ankara



The two heads of office, Birol Ademir and Roderich Egeler, signing the co-operation agreement

Overview of Co-operation activities

			April 2014
Expert mission on construction price index	Ankara		7 – 11
Visit of President Egeler	Ankara		28 – 30
			July 2014
Study visit on the European Statistical System	Berlin		1 – 2

Experience report on the ESTP course “Quality Management in Statistical Agencies – Introductory Course” from the perspective of a Destatis participant



Within the scope of the EU funded European Statistical Training Programme (ESTP), the course “Quality Management in Statistical Agencies” has in part been restructured in 2014 and split into an introductory and an advanced course. The first part entitled “Quality Management in Statistical Agencies – Introductory Course” was held at Statistics Finland in Helsinki from 6 to 8 May 2014. The 18 participants in the course came from 14 European countries and were trained by trainers from Finland and Slovakia.

The entire content of the course was very well structured and the theme was treated in terms of definitions, main concepts and existing standards, product quality and quality reports, tools for quality measurement and improvement, and strategic management. The methods applied were a well-balanced combination of presentations and group work, and the trainers took turns, too. A particularly interesting issue treated by many participants in their papers was the implementation and the results of the self-assessments recently finished in the Member States as part of the Peer Review.

Nearly all participants were very impressed by what quality management can achieve and by how important it is also for official statistics. However, they criticised that in many cases it is not implemented and not supported by the top management of their offices.

Conclusion: this course gives a good overview of the different standards in the context of quality management, with direct reference to official statistics and public administration. Participants get both the theoretical background of this complex theme and information on how it can be implemented in the national statistical office. Although previous knowledge of quality management is useful, it is not a requirement.



Participants in the ESTP course “Quality Management in Statistical Agencies – Introductory Course” held at Statistics Finland in Helsinki

Bilateral meeting in the Russian statistical office



The bilateral talks in Moscow focused on consultations about conducting and processing the German EU-SILC survey (European Community statistics on income and living conditions) and providing the relevant results, and on the methodology of the German household budget surveys (sample survey of income and expenditure, and continuous household budget surveys). Also, the importance of the indicators for national and European social policies was explained in detail. The information and presentations were met with great interest and led to intensive and constructive discussions. For the Russian colleagues, the consultation was highly relevant, also because a UNECE Task Force on Poverty Measurement started working at the beginning of 2014. Both Germany and the Russian Federation are members of the Task Force, in addition to other countries and international organisations.

The discussions about planning the bilateral co-operation activities between the two offices covered the further planning of the study visit on statistical confidentiality in November 2014 and the possibilities of further co-operation supported by the World Bank.



Destatis representatives together with their colleagues from the Russian statistical office

Visit from Abu Dhabi



On 11 March 2014, the head of the Statistics Centre of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi (SCAD) visited the Federal Statistical Office in Wiesbaden for the first time. The visit took place in connection with the signing of the bilateral co-operation agreement between the two offices.

As the co-operation is highly important for Abu Dhabi in political terms, the deputy ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to Germany had come from Berlin to participate in the meeting.

The President and the Vice-President of the Federal Statistical Office welcomed the delegation. Then the head of the international co-operation unit of the SCAD presented the system of official statistics in Abu Dhabi and in

the United Arab Emirates and themes for which the SCAD needs international consultation activities. The system of German official statistics and the international co-operation unit of Destatis were presented to the guests. In addition, themes were discussed that might be treated in further co-operation.

The meeting was taken as an occasion to talk about the preparation of the IAOS conference (International Association for Official Statistics) to be organised by the SCAD in the United Arab Emirates for the first time in 2016.



President Roderich Egeler and the head of the SCAD from Abu Dhabi, Mr Butti Al Qubaisi



The delegation from Abu Dhabi, President Roderich Egeler and Vice-President Dieter Sarreither

First visit from Iraq



The senior management of the Iraqi statistical office and representatives from Iraqi regions visited the Federal Statistical Office in Wiesbaden for the first time on 20 and 21 January 2014. The visit, organised as part of a study tour, was held under the title of “Statistics in a federal system”, as had been requested by the Iraqi colleagues.

President Roderich Egeler welcomed the Iraqi delegation to the Federal Statistical Office. The system of German official statistics, its legal bases, the quality management system, and human resources development tools were presented to the guests.

After their visit to the Federal Statistical Office, the guests visited the Land Statistical Office of Berlin-Brandenburg and Eurostat.



The Iraqi head of office, Dr Mahdi Mohsin Ismail Al Alalak, with President Roderich Egeler signing the visitors' book

First-time visit of a delegation from Taipei



On 5 June 2014, high-level representatives of the Taiwanese Ministry of the Interior visited the Federal Statistical Office in Wiesbaden for the first time. They were accompanied by Jui-Kung Huang, head of the Taipei mission to the Federal Republic of Germany, located in Frankfurt, and Dr Chinghua Tsai.

Upon request of the Taiwanese side, the structure and organisation of the Federal Statistical Office and the co-operation between Destatis and

Eurostat were presented to the guests. Other items on the agenda were geographical information systems and life tables.

During their stay in Germany, the delegation also visited the German Centre of Gerontology, the German Institute for Economic Research in Berlin, and the Federal Institute for Population Research in Wiesbaden.



The delegation from Taiwan with representatives of the Taipei mission to the Federal Republic of Germany, which is located in Frankfurt/Main

Visit from Canada



Early this year, Statistics Canada showed interest in exchanging ideas about international consultation activities regarding statistical capacity building. As the Federal Statistical Office enjoys a very good global reputation in carrying out co-operation projects, the Canadian head of office asked for a first information visit of the Canadian side to take place in Wiesbaden. On 20 March 2014, the Canadian representative of the international co-operation unit, Danielle Lalande, visited the Federal Statistical Office in Wiesbaden.

Germany and Canada are strongly involved in international statistical co-operation. For many years, both statistical offices have been close partners of the National Bureau of Statistics of China (NBS), with co-operation programmes of their own. Close co-ordination of the thematic and regional focal points and of the co-operation tools applied is important in order to ensure efficient consultation. Information was exchanged on common features of, and differences between the co-operation approaches and on interfaces that can be used for more intensive co-operation.

To get a comprehensive picture of the German contribution to developing foreign statistical systems, the guest from Canada also visited the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) in Eschborn.



Danielle Lalande from Statistics Canada (3rd from left) with representatives of the Federal Statistical Office

New staff member – Sebastian Gardiner

Sebastian Gardiner joined the unit responsible for international statistical co-operation in Bonn in June 2014. His work focuses on the World Bank twinning project with the Kazakh statistical office. Here he has taken on responsibilities in the area of both financial and project management. He had gained some prior experience regarding the post-Soviet space during his studies (Eastern and central European regional studies/Economics, with a specific focus on Russia). He also spent a semester abroad at Volgograd State University.



Internship reports

Interns regularly support the international statistical co-operation activities. Here is their feedback:

Louisa Flavel, 2 January to 31 March 2014
in Bonn, International Co-operation

My internship with the International Co-operation unit in Bonn – my very first outside Australia, which is my home country – was both informative and exciting. I particularly enjoyed the international working environment and exchange with my colleagues in different statistical offices.



Emelie Largenius, 13 January to 31 May 2014
in Bonn, International co-operation

For me as a Swedish student, the five months I spent in Bonn were a very rewarding and worthwhile experience. I appreciated every opportunity I was given to participate in activities personally and see how they unfolded in real life. After my time here in Germany I am definitely hooked and will aim to return to Germany as soon as my Bachelor's degree is finished!



Jan Brückmann, 17 February to 11 April 2014
in Wiesbaden, World Bank twinning project
Mongolia, Bilateral co-operation

During my internship in the Wiesbaden unit, I was mainly involved in preparing the final report for the World Bank twinning project with Mongolia. In the course of my work I was able to gather very detailed information and experience with project activities. I was given an insight into the individual stages of project work and planning from the beginning to the current state of affairs.



Verena Schulz, 4 to 14 March 2014
in Wiesbaden, Bilateral Co-operation

My internship was a remarkable period of time during which I experienced typical work situations at the Federal Statistical Office, participated in the preparation and the activities of a visit by a delegation from the Statistics Centre of Abu Dhabi. The experience I have gained in a relatively short time will definitely be useful for both my studies in Economics and my future career.



Verena Ludwig, 28 April to 31 July 2014
in Bonn, Bilateral co-operation

Above all I supported the team in carrying out the World Bank twinning project with Kazakhstan. I really enjoyed the fact that we interns could work on tasks on our own and that each team member took the time to explain his tasks to me.



Rahel Becker, 2 May to 30 June 2014
in Bonn, Bilateral co-operation

“What exactly are you doing in the Federal Statistical Office? Isn’t it that you need math for working there?” Yes, but there were different skills that I needed way more than the mathematical ones during my internship in the unit for International Co-operation, for example engaging interpreters, editing and correcting reports, setting agendas and sending people around the world for the Federal Statistical Office. And of course to make sure that their visas were arranged and hotels were booked. All in all, I gained an interesting insight into this interdisciplinary and dynamic unit. Thanks for everything!



Christine Kühn, 2 June to 15 August 2014
in Wiesbaden, World Bank twinning project
Mongolia, Bilateral co-operation

I particularly enjoyed the insight into a wide range of tasks and the fact that I was immediately involved in planning and organising a visit of a delegation from Taiwan. It was very interesting to see how many things had to be settled in advance to ensure such a visit runs smoothly. I also enjoyed carrying out responsible tasks like preparing parts of the final report for a co-operation project with the Mongolian statistical office. This gave me the chance to learn a lot about the organisation of co-operation activities.



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