

STATISTICS ACROSS BORDERS

International statistical co-operation



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You may contact us at:
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Dear readers,

This year, the institutionalised statistical co-operation of the Federal Statistical Office celebrates its 25th anniversary. The unit was set up in 1991 as there was high demand for consultation at the statistical offices in Central and Eastern Europe and in the former Soviet republics due to the rapid economic and political transformation. In the subsequent years, the EU enlargements involved the need for adjustment, which required additional support. Even in countries which were not candidates for accession, adjustment to EU standards became an important objective.

Outstanding importance is currently attached to the statistical co-operation activities that arise from the monitoring of the United Nations Development Goals¹. These processes illustrate the importance of national statistical authorities for the provision of informative and reliable data on social and economic developments. In the past 25 years, the international co-operation unit of the Federal Statistical Office has supported partner offices in over 35 countries by close co-operation, by the exchange of views between experts, and by joint projects. Further developments in official statistics, ranging from data collection to communication, and challenges resulting from ever scarcer resources are reasons why the support and consultation of foreign partners will continue to be an important area of activity.

In this edition we give an overview of current co-operation activities. The KAZSTAT project with the Kazakh Committee on Statistics is drawing to a close. Before the project will be finished in early 2017, all participants in the project will have to face a number of challenges. The fact that the project has been rated as the most successful of several World Bank projects currently carried out in Kazakhstan provided additional motivation for its further implementation. The importance of long-term partnerships is demonstrated by the continued co-operation with the Mongolian National Statistical Office, which is also covered in this edition. The foundation of that co-operation was laid by the first World Bank twinning project with the Mongo-

¹ UN Resolution 69/315 "Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development".

lian statistical office, which was carried out by the Federal Statistical Office from 2010 to 2014.

The new EU funded twinning project with the statistical office of Azerbaijan has been launched successfully. The official start was marked by the high-level kick-off event in Baku, which was taken as an opportunity for an exchange of views with the President of Azerbaijan.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue.

The editors

Ringo Raupach

Denis Kaschuba

Christine Kronz

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Kazakhstan – Meeting of the heads of office in Wiesbaden



The last meeting of the heads of office in the KAZSTAT project in Germany was held on 14 April 2016. After Roderich Egeler on the German side and Alikhan Smailov on the Kazakh side had been heads of office for many years, this meeting was chaired by their successors. As President of the Federal Statistical Office, Dieter Sarreither welcomed Bakhytbek Imanaliyev¹, the acting Chairman of the Kazakh Committee on Statistics (CS), in Wiesbaden. After four years of joint project co-operation, this was the last meeting in Germany before the closing conference will be held in Kazakhstan in November.

At the planning meeting, the participants had the opportunity to exchange views on what had been achieved so far. Since the project started in 2012, the activities in 21 of 44 sub-components have been finished. For more than 50 individual statistics, the applied methodology was improved or redeveloped in co-operation with the German and international experts. Also, much progress was made in enhancing the IT infrastructure in the central office and in the regional offices. More than 700 staff members participated in training activities. A total 90% of the planned project activities have been implemented. The CS Chairman took the opportunity of the discussions to illustrate the importance of the project results for statistics in Kazakhstan. Important tasks are to ensure the sustainability of project results and to continue the relationships developed with international experts and partners beyond the end of the project.

¹ Acting Head of Office from 1 January to 27 May 2016.



From left to right: Dieter Sarreither, Bakhytbek Imanaliyev, Mustafa Dinc (World Bank) – meeting of the heads of office in Wiesbaden.

The current project activities focus on finishing the ongoing consultations. In 2017, the financial management will be finished and the project report will be completed. At a closing conference, scheduled for November 2016 in Astana, the results obtained will be presented to a wider audience. We will give more details on the conference in the next edition of *Statistics across borders*.

Overview of project activities:

Area	Expert missions in Kazakhstan	Study visits to partner countries
Construction and investment statistics	3	–
Services/ICT	2	–
Finance statistics	–	1
Household surveys	1	–
Crime statistics	–	1
Agriculture	1	–
Mathematical statistical methods .	–	1
Prices	1	3
Quality	1	–
Seasonal adjustment	1	–
Social statistics	1	–
Structural statistics	–	1
Environment	2	2
Dissemination	1	–
National accounts	10	–

KAZSTAT consortium met in Bonn

Six months before the end of the project, the KAZSTAT consortium met other partners in Bonn to exchange experience. The agenda focused on discussing the project results, which were presented both by the consortium and the CS. Apart from representatives of the statistical offices of the Czech Republic, Finland, the Russian Federation, Slovakia and South Korea, which are consortium members, the meeting was attended by representatives of the statistical offices of Turkey (TurkStat), Italy (ISTAT) and France (INSEE).



Participants in the second consortium meeting of the KAZSTAT project in Bonn

Another important item was the evaluation of the project activities carried out. This was based on a survey conducted among the involved international experts after they had finished their missions in Astana. Consequently, comprehensive data material from the preceding four years was available for the evaluation. The presentation of the results showed a clearly positive picture. A large majority of the German and international experts were very satisfied with the realisation and the results of their missions. Special mention should be made of the expert level of the Kazakh statisticians, which was rated as "very good" by 71 % of the experts and as "good" by 26 %.



Work session of the consortium meeting

Start of the twinning project with Azerbaijan



The implementation of the twinning project between the Federal Statistical Office and the State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan (SSC) started in October 2015. Activities focus on quality management, geographical information systems, Community statistics on income and living conditions (EU-SILC), statistics of people with disabilities, and tourism statistics.



Participants in the kick-off event

The consultations have started in all five sub-components, the first activities being missions of the involved experts from the project partner offices of Germany, Bulgaria and the Netherlands. Also, during study visits to the partner countries, the Azerbaijani colleagues had the opportunity to see how work is actually done in the specialised units and to meet a number of colleagues.



From right to left: Sergey Tsvetarsky, President of the Bulgarian National Statistical Institute, President Dieter Sarreither, and Tahir Budagov, Head of the Azerbaijani State Statistical Committee

The ceremonial twinning project kick-off event held in Baku on 27 January 2016 was attended by three heads of office. Apart from Tahir Budagov who, as Head of the SSC, opened the event, Dieter Sarreither, President of the Federal Statistical Office, and Sergey Tsvetarsky, Head of the Bulgarian National Statistical Institute, participated in the event. Malena Mard, Head of the EU delegation in Azerbaijan, underlined the important role of twinning projects in the co-operation between Azerbaijan and the EU countries.

The great importance of the further enhancement of the national statistical system is also acknowledged by political leaders in Azerbaijan. This became obvious in a discussion - which had been arranged at short notice by the Azerbaijani side - between the two heads of office, Dieter Sarreither and Sergey Tsvetarsky, the German Ambassador, Heidrun Tempel, and the President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev. The President emphasised the importance of reliable official statistics as a basis for political decisions, in particular for the process of restructuring the economy in Azerbaijan and for the enhancement of business relations with the European Union Member States.



From left to right: President Dieter Sarreither, President Sergey Tsvetarsky, Malena Mard (Head of the EU delegation in Azerbaijan), Heidrun Tempel (German Ambassador), and Youri Skaskevitch (Eurostat)

In the context of an SSC reorganisation in January 2016, some twinning contacts changed on the Azerbaijani side. To discuss the implementation of the twinning project with the Azerbaijani project management, a management visit was held at the Bulgarian National Statistical Institute in late June 2016 in addition to the regular steering committee meetings in Baku. The visit was not only an opportunity to exchange ideas between the Bulgarian colleagues and the delegation headed by the Azerbaijani head of office, Tahir Budagov. The guests also used the visit to get acquainted with the Bulgarian statistical system.



Ringo Raupach, project leader (Federal Statistical Office), presenting the project content

The following consulting missions have been carried out since January 2016:

January		
27	Kick-off event of the twinning project	Baku
28	1st steering committee meeting	Baku
February		
17 – 18	Twinning project management	Baku
22 – 26	Tourism statistics	Baku
29 – 03 March	Quality management	Baku
March		
14 – 18	EU-SILC	Baku
April		
04 – 08	Statistics of people with disabilities	Baku
11 – 14	Quality management	Baku
18 – 22	Geographical information system	Baku
25 – 28	Tourism statistics (Tourism Satellite Account)	Baku

May

16 – 19	EU-SILC	Baku
20	2nd steering committee meeting	Baku
23 – 27	Statistics of people with disabilities/ (ESSPROS methodology)	Baku

June

02 – 06	Geographical information system	Hamburg/ Wiesbaden/ Frankfurt
02 – 06	EU-SILC	Sofia/ Plovdiv/ Varna
21 – 24	Quality management	Baku
27 – 01 July	Management procedures in the twinning project	Sofia/ Slivek/ Plovdiv

Bilateral co-operation with the Chinese Bureau of Statistics (NBS)



In February 2016, the Federal Statistical Office conducted a five-day study visit in the employment statistics subproject in co-operation with Eurostat. The consultations focused on the current developments and quality criteria of monthly data in Germany and on the technical implementation of estimation methods in the labour force survey by means of the SAS data processing software. In addition, the experts of the Federal Statistical Office presented to the guests from the NBS the rearranged sampling design of the German labour force survey and the further development of the system of household statistics in Germany. At Eurostat, the NBS experts were given detailed information on the specific European requirements regarding methods, technologies and quality framework conditions in the context of collecting monthly data for employment statistics at the European level.



Participants in the study visit on employment statistics in Wiesbaden

In the employment statistics subproject, co-operation activities with the NBS have been performed since 2008 at six-month intervals. The next mission of German experts to China will take place in November 2016. The project is scheduled to end in 2017.



Final meeting of the study visit on employment statistics

Planning talks with representatives of the international division of the NBS were also held in February 2016 to co-ordinate the new project phase of bilateral co-operation for 2017-2019. The co-operation agreement with the NBS, updated in 2012, puts a stronger focus on joint international initiatives of the two offices. In addition, the professional exchange should continue with the co-operation focusing on construction and price statistics after the current subprojects (employment statistics and cost structure survey) have ended. The new project agreements will be signed during a visit of the head of office to Germany in November 2016.

To complete the cost structure survey component, a study visit was held in September 2016 in co-operation with the IT.NRW Land authority, which is responsible for official statistics in Nordrhein-Westfalen.

Overview of the project activities

February		
22 – 24	Planning meeting to co-ordinate new subprojects	Wiesbaden
22 – 26	Study visit on employment statistics	Wiesbaden/ Luxembourg
September		
05 – 09	Study visit on cost structure statistics	Wiesbaden/ Düsseldorf

Mongolia – Smart Government Project to start soon



The World Bank has launched a new twinning project (Smart Government Project) for Mongolia with a focus on enhancing the IT infrastructure of the Mongolian government and administration. Within the Enabling Open Data subcomponent, the Mongolian statistical office is a beneficiary of the new project. It is planned to conduct especially consultations and training activities. Following the long-standing co-operation in the joint twinning project between Germany and Mongolia, which ended in 2014, the Federal Statistical Office is a contracting partner of the Mongolian statistical office again.

The contract negotiations were held in Ulan Bator in early June. The first project phase will comprise five expert missions to Mongolia and seven study visits to Germany or other partner offices. Focal themes will include business statistics, business register, quality management, Open Data, science and culture statistics. In addition to German experts, international experts from statistical offices of Finland, Estonia and Lithuania will be involved.



Building of the Mongolian parliament on Genghis Khan Square

Visit of a delegation from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics



On 17 June 2016, a delegation of representatives from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) and from its superior Planning Commission of the Bangladesh Government visited the Federal Statistical Office in Wiesbaden.

Acting on behalf of the President, Peter Schmidt (Head of the Department "Business Register, Earnings, Industry, Services") welcomed the five-member delegation, which was on a study trip on migration statistics in Germany. After the system of German official statistics and international co-operation of the Federal Statistical Office had been presented, the guests presented the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS). In the context of the national strategy on strengthening official statistics, the BBS envisages comprehensive developments and improvements of the statistical system of Bangladesh.

The reason for the visit was the delegation's wish to obtain information on migration statistics. The main issues here were migrations and how to measure migration activities in Germany. A major item was the problem of illegal migration. In Bangladesh, there are roughly half a million unregistered Rohingya, an ethnic group whose origins are in Myanmar. To resolve the shortcomings in coverage, the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics is currently implementing a database project to register this population group.

The technical talks at the Federal Statistical Office were preceded by a visit to the central foreigners authority in Bielefeld. There the members of the delegation had the opportunity to get some insight into an initial reception centre for refugees and a branch office for refugee registration and accommodation.



Participants from Bangladesh and from the Federal Statistical Office

Togo – co-operation on demography



On behalf of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) carries out the project “Support of the integration of population dynamics into national sector planning” in Togo. The objective of the population dynamics project is to point Togo’s national sector planning and national sector programmes towards making allowances for demographic development in the medium and long term.

Within the scope of the project, a technical talk was held in Bonn in February 2016 with a Togolese delegation comprising the Director of Population Studies in the Ministry for Development Planning, the Director of Co-ordination in the National Statistical Institute, and the Advisor on Population Dynamics of the GIZ. The goal of the talk was to allow an exchange of views on the demographic strategies and statistical systems. The participants on the German side were a representative of the Federal Statistical Office and representatives of the Federal Ministry of the Interior and of the Federal Institute for Population Research.

At the meeting, the national demography policies/strategies and the statistical systems in Germany and Togo were presented. In both areas, common features and differences were identified despite the highly different demographic profiles of the two countries. For example, the genesis of demography as a cross-cutting issue in Togo was similar to that in Germany, which entails challenges for the Federal Ministry of the Interior in co-ordinating relevant topics with all ministries involved.

Important issues discussed with regard to the statistical systems were funding and the co-ordination between the national institutes and other data producers. In the federal system of Germany, great importance is attached to sharing functions with the Länder. The EU works towards standardisation of the statistical systems all over Europe. The biggest challenge in Togo is the co-ordination with the ministries because many of them collect data and

order studies by themselves. However, the relevant units do not have sufficient technical capacities.

The National Statistical Institute of Togo (INSEED), which was set up only in 2015, is not fully operational yet. The Togolese side asked about possible technical support by more experienced institutes, especially with a view to the next census scheduled for 2020. As regards population data, the discussion focused on the census and the intercensal periods, the possibilities of rolling the data forward and the question of their validity.

Another item discussed was the role of the media. In both countries, the national statistical institute actively co-operates with media representatives to communicate to the population the results of surveys and their impact on policy-making. In Germany, however, such processes are more established than in Togo.

Co-operation with the World Bank

The World Bank manages the Trust Fund for Statistical Capacity Building funding activities and projects to support national statistical institutes. The main target group of such activities is developing and newly industrialising countries. Once a year, an advisory body meets at the World Bank in Washington, assessing the projects supported and giving recommendations for further activities. Since 2015, a representative of the Federal Statistical Office has been a member of this body and she also participated in this year's meeting in February/March.

In the past, the activities focused on the development of national strategy plans for statistical systems, whereas in the last few years, the focus has shifted to smaller activities regarding Statistical Capacity Building. Since last year, more activities regarding household surveys have been supported as such surveys are gaining in importance considering the monitoring of the United Nations Development Goals.

Also, in August 2016, the World Bank and the Federal Statistical Office signed a framework agreement on closer co-operation between the two institutions.

Agricultural statistics: Study visit from Macedonia



In May 2016, a delegation from the State Statistical Office of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia visited the Bonn Branch office of the Federal Statistical Office to exchange views on agricultural statistics. The exchange between the German and Macedonian colleagues was financed from an EU programme.

The discussions focused on animal production. In their specialist talks, the staff members of the Division "Agriculture and Forestry, Fisheries" presented an example showing how a survey in this area is conducted. Taking the example of livestock surveys, the application of various data collection tools was demonstrated and the use of administrative data sources explained. Another focus was the statistics on slaughtering of cattle, pigs and poultry. The two sides exchanged experience regarding the methodology and the data requirements at the European level.

Apart from methodological requirements to be met by statistics on animal production, the participants discussed especially the differences arising from the different structures of agricultural holdings in the two countries and their impact on data collection and possible sources of error.

The delegation then continued its visits at the Federal Office for Agriculture and Food. There the discussions focused on milk production statistics.



The two guests from the Macedonian State Statistical Office and the colleagues of the Federal Statistical Office

Internship reports

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

Sven-Patrick von Wahl

January to March 2016 in Bonn

On my first day already, I was completely involved in all processes. I was entrusted with tasks that I could carry out on my own responsibility, and I could take decisions, too. I will especially remember the visit of a delegation of Chinese colleagues to Wiesbaden.



Anastasiia Shutova

February to April 2016 in Wiesbaden

I think what was very important for my future career was my participation in the technical talk at the Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). Also, my visit to the Berlin Information Point was a special experience. I got a good overview of the areas treated at the Information Point. The internship helped me to identify my capabilities and, on that basis, to develop my professional goals.



Magdalena Breyer

April to May 2016 in Bonn

What I liked most during my internship was that I was quickly integrated into the project team and that I had many opportunities to co-operate with other staff members and international partners. The organisation of expert missions and, in particular, the personal involvement in study visits were interesting activities.

**Lisa Gerstlacher**

April to July 2016 in Wiesbaden

My highlight was the visit of a delegation from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics to Wiesbaden in June. Collaborating on my own responsibility in the national contact point of the European Statistical Training Programme (ESTP) was also part of my activities. The constant intercultural relevance completed my complex activities in bilateral co-operation.



Gesa Kuhfahl

May to August 2016 in Bonn

I was delighted to be fully involved in planning and organising the missions and to be allowed to participate in the study visits to Wiesbaden. I will always remember the visit to the Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy in Frankfurt as I was allowed to take charge of this part of the programme.



Ludmilla Nowikow

August to October 2016 in Wiesbaden

Through my internship in the international co-operation unit in Wiesbaden, I have acquired very valuable practical experience. From the very beginning, I was involved in all activities and I had the opportunity to assume much responsibility. What I found most interesting was a study visit from Russia; I was involved in every aspect, from planning and conducting the visit to follow-up activities. In addition, I have learned much about the general activities of the Federal Statistical Office and I had the opportunity to participate in in-house advanced training.



Who is Who? in International Co-operation

Management, Wiesbaden

Statistisches Bundesamt

Planning and Co-ordination, International Co-operation

D – 65180 Wiesbaden

Fax: +49 (0) 611 / 75 89 92

cooperation@destatis.de

Head of division

Bernd Störtzbach

Tel.: +49 (0) 611 / 75 23 51

bernd.stoertzbach@destatis.de

Project and financial controlling

Michael Schäfer

Tel.: +49 (0) 611 / 75 89 30

michael.schaefer1@destatis.de

**EU accession countries, European Neighbourhood Countries,
China, developing countries (Bonn)**

Head of section

Ringo Raupach

Tel.: +49 (0) 611 / 75 89 32

ringo.raupach@destatis.de

Jochen Arnhold

Tel.: +49 (0) 611 / 75 89 38

jochen.arnhold@destatis.de

Leonhard Fix

Tel.: +49 (0) 611 / 75 89 36

leonhard.fix@destatis.de

Sebastian Gardiner

Tel.: +49 (0) 611 / 75 87 63

sebastian.gardiner@destatis.de

Vladislava Karmanova

Tel.: +49 (0) 611 / 75 89 12

vladislava.karmanova@destatis.de

Denis Kaschuba

Tel.: +49 (0) 611 / 75 89 35

denis.kaschuba@destatis.de

Manfred Waschkowski

Tel.: +49 (0) 611 / 75 89 14

manfred.waschkowski@destatis.de

**Bilateral co-operation, European Training Programmes (ESTP,
ENP East)
(Wiesbaden)**

Head of section

Simone Koll

Tel.: +49 (0) 611 / 75 42 81

simone.koll@destatis.de

Christine Kronz

Tel.: +49 (0) 611 / 75 46 42

christine.kronz@destatis.de