

STATISTICS ACROSS BORDERS

International statistical co-operation



2/2009

Federal Statistical Office of Germany

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Dear readers,

We can look back on a busy and successful year 2009:

Two major Twinning projects with the statistical offices of Croatia and Bulgaria have been concluded with well-received closing conferences. Phase II of the large-scale project supporting official statistics in Turkey (USST II), in which the Federal Statistical Office had been involved with many experts, was concluded with a well-attended seminar, too. Several times, the EU Commission assessed that project as the most successful project carried out with Turkish institutions.

In the World Bank Twinning project supporting the Tajik statistical office, the five European statistical offices under the lead of the Federal Statistical Office performed more than 40 consulting and training activities. Next year, which will be the last full project year, will show whether it will be possible to achieve the ambitious project targets. The institutions of the project consortium and their partner institution – the Tajik statistical office – are optimistic in this respect.

In 2009, the Federal Statistical Office for the first time won a contract to carry out an EU Twinning project with a country of the European neighbourhood area: In the project supporting official statistics in Azerbaijan, 2010 will be a particularly busy year with many activities.

With a programme of four Total Quality Management courses funded by the World Bank for the top management of the statistical offices of the Russian provinces, the close co-operation between German and Russian official statistics has been continued in 2009. Two of the courses were held already in 2009 and have been assessed as very good by the participants. The other two courses will be organised in the first half of 2010.

Also, the project-related co-operation with Central Asian statistical offices, with which German official statistics traditionally has maintained partnership relations, was continued in 2009 within the scope of an EU Tacis project.

The statistical capacity building courses, which are tailored to the individual training needs of the foreign partner institutions, have been implemented in 2009 for the Asian Development Bank (five-day course in Manila) and for official statistics of the Lao People's Democratic Republic (course for managers in Wiesbaden).

The long-standing partnership contacts with the statistical offices of the People's Republic of China, Kazakhstan and Korea were maintained in 2009 through many visits at the expert and management levels. Plans for 2010 include a seminar of the three statistical offices of Germany, China and Korea in China.

Consultation and advanced training regarding specific statistical topics and management issues remain an urgent concern of the statistical offices in many regions of the world. Their task is to provide reliable statistics as a basis for national development policy and for monitoring the achievement regarding the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. Also, statistical monitoring of the social and economic consequences of the global financial crisis poses major methodical challenges for statistical offices. So much remains to be done for our experts and partner institutions and we would like to thank them all very much for the good co-operation we had last year.

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions, please send an e-mail to:

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Tajikistan



First successes despite difficult framework conditions

Since 2007, Destatis has supported the statistical office of the Central Asian country of Tajikistan through a number of expert missions and training activities. The TAJSTAT project funded by the World Bank bears first fruit, although it does not always run smoothly for a variety of reasons. But where exactly is Tajikistan?

The Central Asian republic, which separated from the Soviet Union in 1991, is located between its prominent neighbours of China and Afghanistan as well as Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. You have to travel some 5,000 air kilometres to get from Germany to the small country's capital of Dushanbe, which will take you about one day, including stopovers.

So far, Tajikistan has not really succeeded in becoming a stable independent state. A civil war starting in 1992 plunged the young republic into a deep economic crisis. Although the war ended twelve years ago, the country has not entirely recovered yet from the long-term consequences: Tajikistan is still one of the poorest countries of the world. In 2008 the gross domestic product (GDP) per capita was estimated at no more than US-\$ 2,100, while the EU-27 average was some US-\$ 30,000 in the same year.

However, the persistently poor state of the Tajik economy is not only a legacy of the civil war but it is also due to the extreme geographic and climatic conditions because the country largely consists of high mountains and sparse steppe landscape. The short hot summer is always followed by a long hard winter with temperatures far below freezing point. Although, for those reasons, only seven percent of the territory is suited for agricultural use, agriculture is the main source of income for the approximately seven million Tajiks. The craggy landscape also reflects the highly heterogeneous population structure. In the country's remote corners, there are various ethnic

minorities with different linguistic and religious roots. There is even a small community of German origin in Tajikistan. Apart from the Tajik language, Russian still is the lingua franca used by the various ethnic groups. However, at the political level, it is attempted to continuously reduce the economic and cultural influence of the former occupying power.

Tajikistan's enormous need to catch up in many economic and societal areas has caused the international community to start support programmes for the Central Asian country. In addition to the UN and the EU, the World Bank uses so-called Twinning projects (Twinning projects are partnerships between administrative agencies) to contribute to setting up solid structures in public administration. A solid administration is an important prerequisite for effective development assistance. Efficient co-ordination of development assistance definitely requires statistical information from the countries seeking support. First, statistical key figures show the areas to which development assistance should be directed and, second, they are reliable indicators of successful development assistance.

This is why enhancing the Tajik statistical system has top priority for the World Bank, which provides about five million US dollars for a relevant project. An international consortium under the lead of Destatis has been entrusted with implementing the project. Since 2007, staff members of the Federal Statistical Office and colleagues from Sweden, Denmark, the Czech Republic and Slovakia have not only supported the system of official statistics of Tajikistan in nearly all statistical areas but they have also advanced the enhancement of administrative processes and organisational structures. Altogether the project will extend over four years, covering some 30 subject areas.

The international consortium has so far carried out about 80 activities, including both consultation missions of European experts to Tajikistan and study visits of Tajik colleagues to Europe. In some areas, the project partners have achieved first positive results. In Tajik agri-

cultural statistics, sample surveys were conducted for the first time instead of the complete enumerations of small agricultural holdings that were used before. This is certainly not just a minor achievement but a statistical milestone for Tajikistan, which is a country characterised by agriculture. In household statistics and in national accounts, too, the partners co-operate intensively. Another success is emerging in the context of the population census, where the preparation of the survey planned for 2010 is making good progress. Those in charge hope that the results will provide new information on Tajikistan's stage of development and the inhabitant's situation of life (for more details please refer to the following article).

However, that good news cannot hide the challenges still faced by the project partners. As the Tajik colleagues generally have to use obsolete technology, the expert teams who so far have worked in Tajikistan have concentrated on improving the rudimentary working conditions. For example, Destatis colleagues revived a forgotten book binding machine which had been provided by the EU and never been used. They also standardised the design of the statistical publications, most of which are still disseminated in a paper version in Tajikistan. Today a new logo is shown on every publication issued by the office in Dushanbe. However, the obstacles to be overcome are not always of a subject-related kind. A major role is played by the climate because in winter it is often impossible in many regional statistical offices to carry out expert missions or staff training because of ice and snow. And it is especially the regional offices which are responsible for statistical "basic work" and therefore should be in the focus of development assistance.

Considering the country's economic situation, it is obvious that gradually adjusting official statistics in Tajikistan to international standards can only be achieved in a very careful manner – sustainable progress does need some time. But the international experts and their Tajik colleagues still have two years to jointly prepare the office in Dushanbe for the coming tasks.

Overview of the project activities

Expert mission to Dushanbe/Tajikistan, 15 to 25 September 2009

Consultation on national accounts

Expert mission to Dushanbe/Tajikistan, 12 to 17 October 2009

Consultation on construction price statistics

Expert mission to Dushanbe/Tajikistan, 12 to 24 October 2009

Consultation on national accounts

Expert mission to Dushanbe/Tajikistan, 19 to 24 October 2009

Consultation on agricultural statistics

Expert mission to Dushanbe/Tajikistan, 2 to 7 November 2009

Consultation on agricultural statistics

Expert mission to Dushanbe/Tajikistan, 9 to 14 November 2009

Consultation on health statistics

Expert mission to Dushanbe/Tajikistan, 16 to 21 November 2009

Consultation on gender statistics

Expert mission to Dushanbe/Tajikistan, 16 to 21 November 2009

Evaluation of the project progress and adjustment of the work plan

Expert mission to Dushanbe/Tajikistan, 25 to 28 November 2009

Consultation on price statistics

Study visit to Wiesbaden/Germany, 1 to 6 December 2009

Consultation on the business register



Interview with the German Key Expert, Mr Horst Beschmann, in the consultation activities on a population census

Until his retirement, Horst Beschmann was involved in various population census matters at the Federal Statistical Office. In the recent past he has worked as a consultant and provided advice, for instance, to the Saudi Arabian government in the preparation of the Census 2004. The interview was conducted by Sara Braun.

What have been your responsibilities in the context of the activities carried out in Tajikistan?

Horst Beschmann: My first activity in the context of the Twinning project was an Inception Mission in 2007, which included sort of an evaluation of the status quo and the statistical standards in place in the areas of the population census, demography and the labour force survey. The above activity was followed by four short-term missions which had the following goals:

- assisting, in terms of methodology and survey procedures, in the preparation and implementation of the population census scheduled for 2010
- analysing the existing list of questions and refining the questionnaires in place
- participating in the development of the methodological bases for the interviewer-based census
- offering advice and proposals regarding the preparation of the final list of questions and the sample questionnaires for buildings, dwellings and households
- incorporating questions that link demographic variables with variables of labour force statistics

- discussing open questions regarding the specification of survey districts and, in this context, the provision of small area data (mapping)
- giving advice on data capture techniques regarding, for instance, the scanning of questionnaires and lists.

How did you prepare yourself for your mission?

Horst Beschmann: Initially, I used Wikipedia to obtain some general information about Tajikistan's geography, population, history, policy, religion and economy.

These were the first pieces of information I got about Tajikistan. In addition, I knew that the latest census was conducted in 2000 and that, in line with the recommendations of the United Nations, the next population census would have to take place in 2010, that is after a period of ten years. Also, my contacts at Destatis provided me with detailed information about the Tajik statistical system.

Furthermore, both the comprehensive expertise I had built up while working at the Federal Statistical Office (population census section and migration section) and the experience I had gained as a census/survey adviser abroad were very helpful for preparing myself. This was particularly true for the experience I had acquired in the whole course of the 2008 population census in St. Helena.

How would you describe your initial census-related activities at the Tajik statistical office?

Horst Beschmann: My first activity was the above-mentioned assessment of the status quo in June 2007. In August 2008, I attended a seminar in Rogun where I obtained detailed information about the forthcoming population census. The seminar was designed to prepare a census pilot survey which took place in autumn 2008.

The colleagues with whom I co-operated during that time worked either in the statistical census department or in other units of the of-

fice. In addition, I worked together with the Head of the statistical office of the Tajik capital Dushanbe and, in the course of the seminar, with representatives from the regional statistical offices. During my most recent visit in March 2009, I also met for talks with three UNFPA representatives and a representative from the World Bank.

What particular aspects have you taken into account in your work?

Horst Beschmann: To start with, more than 90 percent of the Tajik population are followers of the Islamic faith. In addition, the major part of the population living in rural areas has almost no access to any educational institutions. As these facts have to be duly considered, it is impossible to conduct a population census based on European standards.

As a matter of fact, the Tajik census will be carried out as an interviewer-based survey. For this reason, the approach to be taken in planning and calculating the data collection effort must differ, for instance, from the German approach. In Germany, the households complete the relevant questionnaires and either return them to the interviewer on a fixed day or send them back in an envelope. In Tajikistan, however, data collection can start only after or on the census day. The effort required to directly contact the households and carry out the interviews there is therefore much bigger. And it was certainly new to me that other forms of conducting the census or returning the questionnaires were not yet taken into consideration. It should also be noted that the ways in which administrative authorities think and act are still strongly affected by former Soviet patterns.

What have you been able to achieve and what remains to be done?

Horst Beschmann: Based on a range of examples, the organisation of a population census, the instruments to be used (questionnaires, lists, instructions, maps, work plans and time schedules) and ways

of their further development were illustrated to the partners. It was especially important to develop awareness of the necessity to add identification codes to the questionnaires in order to allow proper processing and assignment and to have an automated (matching) procedure in place to ensure an efficient transmission of geographic codes.

Before the next work steps can be carried out, the analysis of the pilot survey results should be completed. The survey programme and, in this context, the questionnaires should now be decided upon and be finalised. The preparation of instructions including a harmonised lecture for the training of interviewers and other staff should be completed. A glossary which will provide the final definitions of the survey variables should be compiled. Both the manual and automated processing procedures should be illustrated in what are called data flow charts. The mapping program should be finalised for all survey districts. And finally, public relations work should be intensified to raise the population's awareness of the census.

What advice would you give to experts before they travel to Tajikistan?

Horst Beschmann: Experts should be able to adapt to changing conditions and have good expertise. They should be capable of developing good relations with their partners, have an understanding of the country's culture, possess good organisational skills and demonstrate personal and professional commitment during their mission. In addition, knowing some initial words in Russian would always be very helpful. And finally, the experts should have a small supply of pills to cure sudden stomach and bowel disorders.



Environment statistics in Central Asia

The project on the Further Development of National Statistics in the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan (TACIS-Statistics 11) was launched in the middle of the year. The Federal Statistical Office is involved in several project components and, in particular, in environment statistics. The objective of this component is to improve environmental management in the Central Asian region by enhancing the systems of environment statistics. This goal is to be achieved by:

- adopting the new international methodology for statistical production in the areas of environmental monitoring, climate protection and the management of natural resources
- providing training to staff in adopting statistical standards with the aim to compile internationally comparable statistics, and
- developing effective co-operation between the statistical offices of the Central Asian region in the area of environment statistics.

While in Turkmenistan the consultation activities will only be launched at the beginning of 2010, the situation of the current systems of environment statistics could already be assessed and further activities and pilot surveys be designed both in the Kyrgyz Republic and in Tajikistan. As regards the Kyrgyz Republic, the focus was initially placed on recording air pollution caused by enterprises and motor traffic. In Tajikistan, further issues were discussed in relation to the statistics of water utilisation and waste water treatment. In the context of a joint study visit to Germany, which was organised for representatives from the two countries, the necessary pilot surveys were prepared. Also, the associated methods and procedures used in Germany were introduced and illustrated by examples.

Overview of the Tacis-11 project activities

Component 2: Industrial statistics

Expert mission to Bishkek/Kyrgyz Republic, 29 June to 10 July 2009

Assessment of the status quo and consultation on business register issues

Study visit to Wiesbaden, 25 to 27 August 2009

Consultation on the structure and content of a business register

Component 3: Labour migration and population statistics

Expert mission to Bishkek/Kyrgyz Republic, 3 to 12 August 2009

Assessment of the status quo and consultation on the preparation of a pilot survey

Study visit to Wiesbaden, 6 to 8 October 2009

Consultation on methodological issues and continuation of pilot survey preparation

Expert mission to Bishkek/Kyrgyz Republic, 9 to 20 November 2009

Consultation on the preparation of a pilot survey and conduct of a seminar on standards in use

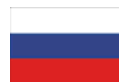
Component 12: Environment statistics

Expert mission to Bishkek/Kyrgyz Republic, 13 to 15 July 2009, and to Dushanbe/Tajikistan, 16 to 23 July 2009

Assessment of the status quo and consultation on environment statistics

Study visit to Wiesbaden, 27 to 29 October 2009

Consultation on environment statistics and the preparation of a pilot survey



Total Quality Management (TQM) course for Russian regional statisticians

Last year the World Bank issued an invitation to tender for a project to support official statistics of the Russian Federation in implementing quality standards. The Federal Statistical Office won a contract to hold four courses with the same content for the heads of all regional statistical offices of Russia. The courses were to cover all aspects of Total Quality Management (TQM).

The Russian Federation consists of 83 regions with different levels of autonomy. In nearly all regions there is an office for statistics subordinate to the central Statistical Office of the Russian Federation (Rosstat). In contrast to the decentralised system of official statistics in Germany with the individual statistical offices of the Länder acting independently, the Russian regional statistics agencies do not have decision-making power but merely execute Rosstat's instructions.

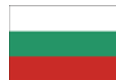
In September, a delegation from the regional management level consisting of 19 heads of statistical offices or their substitutes was sent to Bonn to attend the first course, which was to familiarise them with the TQM concept and its implementation in German official statistics. Possible uses of TQM in the Russian statistical system also were to be identified. For the period from 14 to 25 September, Destatis organised a course programme comprising 17 co-ordinated expert lectures from different subject fields. First the experts of the Federal Statistical Office informed the participants about the structure of official statistics in Germany and the basic theoretical concept of TQM. After they had thus been equipped with the necessary knowledge, special subject areas of statistics were treated with a view to securing quality standards. These included human resources management, deadline monitoring, EU quality reports and the dissemination of statistics.

In addition to the expert lectures delivered at the Bonn Branch Office, the programme also held several excursions. For instance, the guests visited the Hessian Land Statistical Office in Wiesbaden, the citizens' office in Frankfurt which is responsible also for statistics and elections, and Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Union in Luxembourg. The rather varied and diverse programme ensured that participants were very content with the events in spite of the tight time schedule and intensive discussions about specialist issues. Accordingly, the evaluation was excellent: about 72% of the participants were very satisfied with the course, a total of 97% were satisfied or very satisfied. These results underline the high standard of knowledge transfer on the part of Destatis in international co-operation projects.

The success of the course was due not exclusively to expert competence. It also was the friendly attitude of experts, organisers and the Russian participants in their dealings with each other which created a pleasant atmosphere. Many already knew each other from earlier events organised by the Federal Statistical Office and had the opportunity to renew their common memories. Especially during the cultural programme which did not belong to the official part of the course, an intercultural exchange took place in intensive discussions and during interesting excursions.

On the occasion of a day trip, for example, the delegation visited Cologne Cathedral and strolled through the tiny streets in the old part of town. Another highlight was a trip on the River Rhine from Bonn to Rüdesheim and back. The participants were served food and drink on the boat, enjoyed a beautiful view of the idyllic sunny landscape and got to know the wine-growing Rheingau area during a stay in Rüdesheim. Listening to music and dancing on the upper deck of the boat, the group returned to Bonn at sunset.

In November another delegation of Russian heads of statistical offices visited Bonn. As in the first course, the organisers and experts again managed to pass on their knowledge and experience to the Russian colleagues. So both sides contributed to intensifying the bilateral relations to the Russian Federation in the field of statistics. The two remaining courses, which are to familiarize around 40 other heads of statistical offices with the TQM system in statistics, will take place in March and April 2010.



Twinning project with Bulgaria – a complete success

A seminar held on 7 and 8 September 2009 marked the end of the successful third Twinning project with Bulgaria. Representatives of the project partners, Eurostat and other Bulgarian institutions and also the heads of statistical offices of the neighbouring countries met in Sofia to acknowledge the success of co-operation. The Federal Statistical Office had undertaken this 18-month project together with INSEE, the French National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies, as its junior partner and with experts from Denmark, Finland, Austria, Poland and Hungary. The Head of the Statistical Office of Bremen, Mr Jürgen Dinse, acted as a long-term adviser in Sofia from March 2008 to September 2009. The project comprised the following four components:

- improving the regional structure and co-operation between the central office and the regional offices and among the regional offices
- training courses on various statistical topics and management behaviour,
- introducing a system of cost and performance accounting and
- reducing the burden on both respondents and regional offices.

A big challenge was the considerably reduced project duration. Instead of the originally scheduled 24 months, not more than 18 months were available for implementing the project. The Bulgarian Central Financing and Contracting Unit (CFCU) could only award the project contract after the European Commission had transferred the responsibility for administering the pre-accession assistance resources to Bulgaria (EDIS accreditation, as it is called / EDIS = Extended Decentralised Implementation System). Despite the shortened period of implementation, all 73 consultation activities were carried out.

The State Statistical Office of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia contributed significantly to the success of the project. In the context of introducing a system of cost and performance accounting, experts from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia passed on their experience in that area to their Bulgarian colleagues. In the course of a joint Twinning project between 2006 and 2008, the Federal Statistical Office had established initial contact with the State Statistical Office.

The recently completed project was, so to speak, the third chapter in a long success story. Already between 1997 and 2002, the Federal Statistical Office provided consultation activities to the Bulgarian office in the framework of the Phare programme (Phare = EU pre-accession assistance programme for accession countries). And last but not least, the good co-operation with the Bulgarian colleagues was a crucial aspect in taking the decision to apply for a Twinning light project on external migration. The project leader was Dr Bernd Richter of the Land Statistical Office of the Free State of Saxony. He carried out the six-month project together with other German experts from October 2003. From a Bulgarian perspective, the analysis of external migration, which was initiated in this context, was of great importance as Bulgaria suffered a lot from an emigration of academic staff, the much quoted academic brain drain. In June 2005, the German-Bulgarian Twinning activities were continued by a project on the following topics: information society, income and living conditions, and national accounts. Dr Bernd Richter was again prepared to take part in the project – this time as a Resident Twinning Adviser (RTA). The Federal Statistical Office was supported in its activities by Denmark as a project junior partner and by colleagues from the Czech statistical office. After a total of 52 project activities had been carried out, the project was successfully completed in September 2007.

Hence three successful Twinning projects took place between the German and the Bulgarian statistical offices within a period of six years. A key criterion for the success of the three projects was the

continuity in the composition of the project management groups of both offices, which formed the basis for trustful co-operation and thus a well-coordinated project administration. The experience gained by the supporting partner offices in the course of long-term co-operation played an important role, too.

In view of the above successes, the forthcoming continuation of the German-Bulgarian co-operation is an especially pleasant prospect. The Federal Statistical Office and the National Statistical Institute of Bulgaria as its junior partner applied successfully for a Twinning project with Azerbaijan. In November, Mr Sergej Tsvetarsky of the Bulgarian statistical office started his work as a long-term adviser in Baku. Hence a new leaf has been turned in the history of German-Bulgarian co-operation.

Overview of the project activities

Study visit to Warsaw, Krakow and Wroclaw/Poland, 29 June to 4 July 2009

Information on the regional structure of official statistics in Poland

Expert mission to Slivek/Bulgaria, 7 to 10 July 2009

Management training 3 and 4 for managerial staff

Expert mission to Sofia/Bulgaria, 16 to 17 July 2009

Introduction of a system of cost and performance accounting

Expert mission to Sofia/Bulgaria, 30 July 2009

5th meeting of the Project Steering Committee

Expert mission to Sofia/Bulgaria, 4 to 5 August 2009

Introduction of a system of cost and performance accounting

Expert mission to Sofia/Bulgaria, 24 to 28 August 2009

Introduction of a system of cost and performance accounting

Expert mission to Slivek and Sofia/Bulgaria, 7 to 9 September 2009

Seminar to mark the end of the Twinning project



Start of the Twinning project with the Azerbaijani statistical office

As outlined recently, the Federal Statistical Office – together with the statistical offices of Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Lithuania – applied successfully for an EU Twinning project designed to support the official statistical system in Azerbaijan. Hence the Federal Statistical Office for the first time won a contract for a project with a country of the European neighbourhood area. The consultation activities and assistance to be provided to the State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan refer to the following areas: national accounts, informal economy, business statistics and price statistics.

The project was officially launched by what is called a kick-off meeting in Baku on 3 December 2009. The first activities will be carried out not later than in January 2010.

Expert mission to Baku, 26 to 30 July 2009

Selection of the RTA assistant and interpreter

Study visit to Wiesbaden, 3 to 9 August 2009

Completion of project preparation

Kick-off meeting to Baku, 3 December 2009

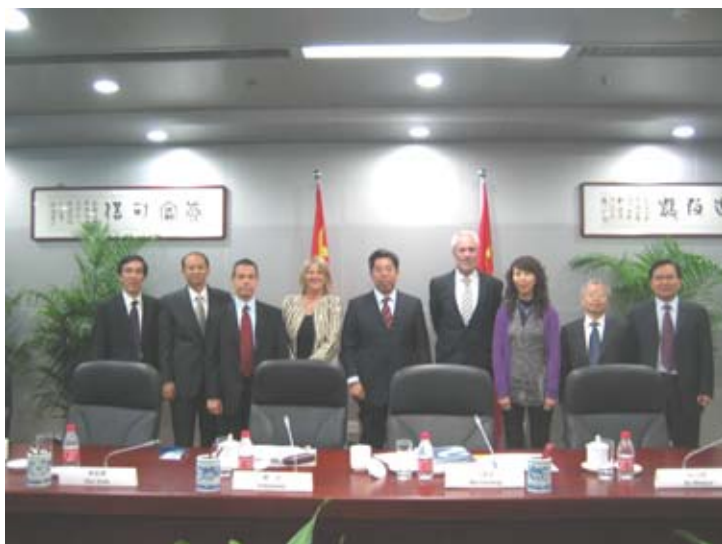
Official start of the project

Exchange of experience between heads of office

Apart from project-related co-operation with statistical offices in Europe and Asia, the exchange of experience with heads of statistical partner offices is a good occasion to intensify existing partnerships, to improve one's knowledge of the partner's institutional framework conditions and to explore the requirements for future joint activities or initiatives at the international level.

In that context, three visits of heads of office were held in the second half of 2009:

In November, the President of the Federal Statistical Office visited the Head of the Chinese central statistical office, Commissioner Ma Jiantang. In the discussions, information on current bilateral projects and on the preparation of the population censuses in Germany and China was exchanged.



From left to right: Feng Nailin, Xian Zude, Günter Moser, Sibylle von Oppeln-Bronikowski, Commissioner Ma Jiantang, President Roderich Egeler, Zhai Yan, Cheng Zilin, Sheng Laiyun

Both heads of office emphasised that the long-standing trusting co-operation provides positive impetus for the further development of the two statistical systems and that it definitely is in the mutual interest to continue this at a high level.

The Director of the Bosnian statistical office, Mr Zdenko Milinovic, visited the Federal Statistical Office with a delegation of leading representatives of his office in November. The programme of the study visit comprised the exchange of information on strategic issues regarding the enhancement of the Bosnian statistical system and possible supporting activities by experts of the Federal Statistical Office.



From left to right: Simone Koll (Destatis), Wolfgang Schulze (Destatis), Dijana Mlikota (BHAS), Günter Moser (Destatis), Peter Weigl (Vice-President Destatis), Sulejman Hasanović (BHAS), Zdenko Milinović (Director BHAS), Jasna Samardžić, Nataša Lučić (BHAS), Edin Šabanović (BHAS)

In December, the Head of the Mongolian statistical office, Chairman Mendsaikhan, visited the Federal Statistical Office. Since the early 1990s, the two statistical offices have entertained good co-operation contacts. In 2003, the co-operation was intensified on the basis of a partnership agreement, which has been the framework for several projects carried out successfully. Possibilities of future project-related co-operation were discussed and the two heads of office informed each other about the strategic priorities in the work programmes of their statistical offices. The Federal Statistical Office presented its range of consultation and training activities offered for statistical capacity building.

Kick-off-meeting: Visit from Laos

From 24 to 28 August 2009, a seven-member delegation of the Lao Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI), to which the statistical office of the Lao People's Democratic Republic is organisationally attached, visited the Federal Statistical Office (Destatis) for a seminar on "Challenges and Solutions in a Modern Statistical System". On the occasion of a seminar on "Challenges in Managing Statistical Systems" held at the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in Manila in March 2009 the Federal Statistical Office had been approached with the request to organise that event. The target group of that first seminar, which had been held by two German experts, had included leading staff members of the Lao MPI.

The purpose of the second seminar, which was tailored to the specific wishes of the Lao partners, was to contribute to supporting Laos in setting up a modern statistical system. The seminar programme was very broad-ranging and covered topics that are important for statistical offices, such as information on the German statistical system and its legal bases, the organisational principles applying to sta-

tistical offices, the structure and tasks of a methodical-mathematical organisation unit, information on the German preparation of the population census and Total Quality Management.

The Lao representatives emphasised their intention to co-ordinate the statistics-related development assistance provided by the various international donor institutions according to the national information requirements in terms of development policy. On the occasion of a concluding presentation on assistance programmes of the EU and other international donors, they expressed their strong interest in project-related co-operation with German official statistics.



From left to right: Vixay Santivong (MPI), Dr. Samaychanh Boupcha (MPI), Sibylle von Oppeln-Bronikowski (Destatis), Khamchan Vongseneboun (MPI), Vice-President Peter Weigl (Destatis), Phonesaly Souksavath (MPI), Vice-Minister Dr. Bounthavy Sisouphanthong (MPI), Bounmy Vilayichith (MPI), Thirakha Chantalanouvong (MPI)

News in brief



USST II project with Turkey conducted

On 30 November 2009, the EU-funded project on Upgrading the Statistical System of Turkey (USST II) was terminated. The Federal Statistical Office performed a number of expert missions in the areas of environment statistics, use of information and communication technologies in households and enterprises, health statistics and institution building and participated in the meetings of the Project Steering Committee and in the final conference. Also, the Federal Statistical Office welcomed Turkish delegations in Wiesbaden and Bonn and provided consultation on various specific statistical issues.

The co-operation activities have contributed to intensifying the traditionally good co-operation between the two statistical offices and both sides have benefited from the exchange of expert information. At the final conference held in Ankara on 6 November 2009, the EU delegation praised the project as the most successful EU project with Turkey in a number of years.

Overview of the project activities

Study visit to Bonn and Braunschweig, 30 June to 2 July 2009

Economic analyses of agro-monetary data

Expert mission to Ankara, 31 August to 4 September 2009

Use of information and communication technologies in households

Expert mission to Ankara, 12 to 16 October 2009

Setting up a system of health accounts

Study visit to Wiesbaden, 26 to 28 October 2009

Material flow accounts

Expert mission to Ankara, 5 to 6 November 2009

Last meeting of the Project Steering Committee and final conference

Bilateral co-operation with Kazakhstan

Consultation on services statistics in Astana

For a number of years already, the Kazakh Statistical Office has enjoyed a good statistical reputation in the region of Central Asia. Through the co-operation with German official statistics, the Kazakh side gets important impetus to further enhance Kazakh official statistics and turn it into a market-oriented information provider. For Kazakhstan, which is going to be a newly industrialising country rich in natural resources and developing towards a service society with international trade contacts, setting up services statistics is of major importance. The provision of reliable and internationally comparable statistics on the country's services sector will ideally complement the fields of competence of official Kazakh statistics and, in addition, will supply important information to German investors for their decision-making regarding their involvement in Kazakhstan on the basis of bilateral economic agreements.

A representative of the Federal Statistical Office, which had been entrusted with that task by the Federal Ministry of Economics, performed a consultation on services statistics in the Kazakh Statistical Office in Astana from 30 November to 4 December 2009. The goal of the consultation was to support the Kazakh Statistical Office in developing a survey concept. The consultation focused on exchanging experience as regards conducting the annual and quarterly surveys of services in the two countries. Apart from issues of content and methodology, organisational questions regarding the surveys as well as using administrative data in official statistics were discussed.

57th Session of the International Statistical Institute in South Africa

Back in 2003 the World Statistics Congress of the International Statistical Institute (ISI) had been held in Berlin. In 2009 the world's statisticians met in Durban, South Africa, for its 57th session. The ISI and its eight sections organise these biennial World Congresses to provide a platform for a continuous exchange of scientific and expert information in the sphere of statistics. With about 1,200 scientific papers grouped for presentation at some 230 meetings, the number of contributions offered was high. The ISI Congress in Durban matched its predecessor of Lisbon in size with the number of participants amounting to around 2,500 persons.

The papers and presentations of participants from Destatis focused on topics of official statistics, ranging from the reform of business statistics, statistical confidentiality and anonymisation issues to matters of quality assurance and environmental-economic accounting. All expert papers were published by the organisers at www.statssa.gov.za/isi2009/ or via the ISI website (www.isi.cbs.nl/). In the field of official statistics, several meetings dealt for instance with the world financial crisis, the 2010/11 census round, green accounting and climate protection matters and the measuring of sustainable development. There also was a German presentation on sustainability indicators in Germany and the way they are linked with environmental-economic and national accounting.

Congresses of that kind also serve the exchange of information among expert colleagues outside the conference programme, the discussion and further development of existing activities and the initiation of new activities in bilateral, supra- and international co-operation. In this context, the Head of the German delegation had talks with the Heads of the national statistical offices of Bulgaria and Macedonia and with the delegation of the South-Korean Statistical

Office (KOSTAT). These offices work together very closely with Destatis in projects of statistics co-operation or are involved in ongoing projects or project tenders.

On the occasion of the ISI General Assembly Meeting, the official invitation was issued to the 58th ISI Session which will take place in Dublin from 21 to 26 August 2011, and Hong Kong was confirmed as the host of the 59th ISI World Congress of 2013.



Visit of Japanese construction statisticians to Wiesbaden

On 13 November 2009, a delegation from the Japanese Construction Ministry visited the Federal Statistical Office in Wiesbaden. Colleagues from industrial statistics provided the delegation with information on the methods of construction statistics.

Bilateral co-operation with the People's Republic of China



The German-Chinese co-operation was continued, among other things, by a visit of President Egeler to Beijing (see also page 24).

Study visit to Wiesbaden, 15 to 21 July 2009

Continuation of the project on Employment Statistics

Expert mission to Beijing/PR of China, 11 to 19 September 2009

Continuation of the project on Statistical Legislation

Expert mission to Beijing/PR of China, 23 to 31 October 2009

Continuation of the project on Data Dissemination via the Internet and Statistical Information Services

Visit of the Head of Office to Beijing/PR of China, 31 October to 4 November 2009

Exchange of opinions and information between the heads of office

Expert mission to Beijing/PR of China, 6 to 14 November 2009

Continuation of the project on Employment Statistics

Expert mission to Beijing/PR of China, 6 to 14 November 2009

Continuation of the project on Earnings

Expert mission to Beijing/PR of China, 24 to 27 November 2009

Second meeting of the German-Chinese Working group on statistics

Trainees' statements

Ms Nina Geisler – in Wiesbaden from 10 August to 6. November 2009



„The task of looking after international guests – from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan – during their study visits to Germany turned into a very enriching discourse on environmental statistics, but also on the countries and their people.“

Mr Philipp Schade – in Bonn from 16 August to 31 October 2009



„The highlight of my ten weeks at the Office surely was having been involved in the final seminar of the Twinning project with the Bulgarian statistical office. In Sofia I got to know some interesting people from the European ‘statistical scene’. I became aware of the fact that international co-operation does not only presuppose expert knowledge, personal contacts between the representatives of the institutions involved also play an important part.

Although statistics co-operation is without doubt exotic when it comes to the tasks performed by German public authorities, I have managed to get a good idea of what work in the public service is like.“

Mr David Bencek – in Bonn from 1 September to 30 October 2009



„The absolute highlight of my traineeship was the time when I lent a hand in organising a two-week advanced training seminar held by Destatis for heads of regional statistical offices of the Russian Federation.“

Our thanks go to all trainees for supporting our activities in the past half year!

Internal changes

There have been important personnel changes at the Office this year. Mr Bernd Störtzbach, who from 2004 led numerous bilateral and EU Twinning projects to success as project leader, has been responsible for the co-operation with Eurostat, the statistics agencies of the United Nations and the OECD since 1 November 2009. He will continue to be the contact for the ISI conference at Destatis. His successor as Head of Section for the bilateral and project-related co-operation with statistical offices in partner countries is his staff member of many years, Ms Simone Koll.

We wish both of them good luck with their new tasks.



From left to right: Carola Lerner, Kerstin Dietzel, Andreas Neubauer, Simone Koll, Bruno Speer, Nicole Schmickler, Bernd Störtzbach, Birgit Zimmermann, Dennis Claus

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