

DIRECTION DE LA COORDINATION STATISTIQUE ET DES RELATIONS INTERNATIONALES

Unité de la Coopération Technique Internationale

Dossier suivi par :
P. VERDIER
Tél. : 01.41.17.53.13
Fax : 01.41.17.66.52
Messagerie : pierre.verdier@insee.fr

Paris, 26 January 2005

INSEE cooperation in social statistics

Pierre Verdier

1. General framework

INSEE activity in international cooperation has two main features:

- It is part of the French cooperation policy, with the general goal of helping beneficiary countries build a statistical system complying with international standards;
- It contributes to multilateral cooperation programmes, under the aegis of international organisations.

In addition, INSEE cooperation furthers the setting-up of partnerships with other NSIs and therefore comes within the development of international relations of the institute.

INSEE cooperation strategy is implemented according to three main principles:

- To favour regional approaches towards regions of economic integration, by organising multicountry activities (seminars, workshops);
- To link bilateral and multilateral programmes, in order to optimise the impact of actions by making the best use of limited resources;
- To concentrate bilateral cooperation on a limited number of “programme-countries”, selected according to their capacities and with regard to the expected effectiveness of cooperation efforts. To that aim, INSEE privileges the development of medium or long-term projects, which prove the best way to produce significant and sustainable results.

The objectives of cooperation differ according to regions of the world and to the level of development of statistical systems in beneficiary countries:

- For new EU Member States and candidate countries, the common objective is to comply with European requirements in statistics (acquis communautaire), in order to prepare their full integration into the European statistical system. Adoption of European standards is also a common orientation followed gradually by Balkan countries and some CIS countries.
- For other countries, statistical cooperation aims at setting-up statistical systems able to provide reliable and comparable statistics and indicators and to monitor the results of economic and development policies.

2. Geographic priorities

There are three main priority areas in INSEE cooperation:

- Central European countries: In the nineties INSEE has developed intensive cooperation programmes with Central European countries, candidate to membership into the European Union, mainly within the framework of European technical assistance programmes (PHARE). INSEE has concentrated bilateral cooperation projects on five countries: Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania and Hungary. But multilateral activities such as seminars have been addressed to all candidate countries.

In the next few years, the demand for cooperation with Central European countries could decrease, but on the other hand, cooperation activities could develop with Balkan countries such as Croatia and even Serbia, and also with Turkey.

- Mediterranean countries: INSEE has a tradition of cooperation with French-speaking Mediterranean countries. Cooperation is carried out either from bilateral French funding, or within the framework of European programmes (MEDA). Regular programmes are carried out with Morocco and Tunisia, cooperation is more limited with Algeria. INSEE provides also technical assistance to Lebanon.

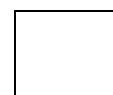
- African countries: Sub-Saharan Africa is a historical priority area of INSEE cooperation. However, there are now few activities of INSEE experts in African countries. Technical assistance is provided mostly through "Afristat", which is an international organisation created in 1993 in order to support the development of national statistical systems in this area. INSEE also supports training of statisticians in the African high schools of statistics.

3. Forms of cooperation

INSEE has developed both bilateral cooperation projects with selected countries and multilateral activities, such as international seminars and specialised training sessions.

- Bilateral cooperation: Projects with beneficiary countries generally consist of a series of short-term (maximum one week) missions of French experts and study visits to France of statisticians from these countries, on the basis of common agreed terms of reference. Work goes on between two actions through E-mails, exchange of documents...

- International seminars: For a number of years INSEE has developed the recourse to multilateral seminars, which have obvious advantages in terms of cost-efficiency ratio. They



allow to mobilize more experts than bilateral actions, to invite more countries to participate and to ease wide exchanges of experiences between them. Their duration is usually 2 or 3 days.

- Training sessions: Training of statisticians from transition and developing countries is also a significant part of INSEE technical cooperation. Training sessions have been organised for several years in the form of multicountry seminars in a specialised Training Centre, CEFIL, their duration being 2 or 3 weeks. Most of them have been provided for two regions: Central European countries, within the framework of the PHARE programme, and Sub-Saharan African countries.

4. Cooperation in social statistics: main themes

Referring to the number and the importance of actions carried out over the past five years, the main themes of cooperation in the area of social statistics are the following:

- Population censuses: there have been a number of requests for consultancies on population censuses, more often about data processing, analysis and dissemination than preparation and data collection. Some actions have been focused on technical questions such as optical reading of questionnaires. Nowadays a number of countries are looking for alternative methods to general population censuses carried out every ten-year or so. This has led INSEE to present in several occasions the French renovated population census.

- Employment and labour market statistics: depending on countries' needs, cooperation in this field has covered various issues: information sources (labour force survey, administrative sources); methods of measurement of employment and unemployment, including estimations at regional and local level; measurement of under-employment and of "informal" employment...

- Living conditions and poverty measurement: cooperation has been carried out with several countries in the field of statistics on living conditions. It aimed at setting up sample surveys on living conditions and tackled all aspects: sampling methods, processing of results, treatment of non-responses, imputation, re-weighting... Cooperation on measurement of poverty has resulted in international comparisons and this theme has been dealt with in bilateral cooperation projects, in an international seminar and training sessions.

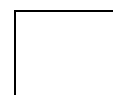
- Use of administrative sources: this is a subject of common interest for statistical offices, which try making the best use of administrative data and combining it effectively with statistical surveys. Some bilateral consultancies, but also international seminars and a multicountry training session were devoted to this issue.

5. Bilateral cooperation projects

The most significant cooperation activities have been carried out over the past five years with the following countries:

- Czech Republic: household surveys on living conditions and measurement of poverty;

- Slovakia: demographic comparisons and projections of population (cooperation with this country on poverty measurement was carried out before 2000);



- Hungary: population and employment statistics; links between censuses, estimations of population and labour force surveys,
Population census, esp. optical reading of questionnaires,
Statistics on living conditions and measurement of poverty;
- Poland: household surveys on living conditions and measurement of poverty,
Population census: dissemination of results;
- Romania: training on estimation methods of small areas;
- Lebanon: living conditions and household consumption budget survey;
- Ukraine: labour market statistics, incl. Labour force survey, estimations of employment and unemployment, measurement of underemployment;
- Moldova: employment statistics, particularly employment in the informal sector and informal employment;
- Tunisia: employment and unemployment statistics,
Statistics on wages,
Participation in a seminar on population censuses;
- Gabon: population census, in particular processing and dissemination of results; setting-up of a sampling basis.

6. International seminars

2000 International comparisons of poverty

This seminar was co-organised in Bratislava by INSEE and the Slovak Statistical Office. It was addressed to NSIs of candidate countries. Multiple approaches of poverty were presented and discussed. Several countries presented their experience and results of their work.

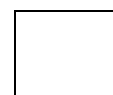
2004 SILC seminar

INSEE organized in January 2004 a seminar on the new European project "SILC" (Statistics on income and living conditions), in order to address the request of acceding and candidate countries to benefit from the experience of the institute in conducting surveys on income and living conditions and also in following panel samples.

The seminar regrouped 40 participants coming from all acceding countries, including Malta and Cyprus, from candidate countries (Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey) as well as from Belgium and Croatia.

As an introduction Eurostat presented the whole project EU-SILC. This project stands in for the "European panel" conducted over the period 1994-2001. Its launching, planned for 2004, addresses increasing requirements from political authorities for reliable and recent data on living conditions, particularly indicators on poverty and social exclusion. The project is designed on the one hand to provide comparable annual data on income, poverty and social exclusion, on the other hand to allow the longitudinal follow-up of the populations thanks to the building up of panels.

The contributions performed by the various persons in charge of the project in France covered a very wide scope, which included:



- Theoretical and methodological aspects of sampling and estimation, with the participation of a panel specialist from Statistics Canada;
- Aspects related to organization and implementation of the information collection in the field; the making of survey questionnaires, on the basis of tests performed in 2002 and 2003;
- Results of analyses conducted in France on the income measure and distribution;
- Statistical approaches of poverty observation.

Employment and labour market statistics

INSEE and the Slovak Statistical Office organised in December 2004 in Bratislava a seminar on employment and labour market statistics. Its objectives were to favour exchange of experiences about national methods of evaluation of labour market statistics, in order to better harmonise statistical data at European level.

There were about 50 participants from 17 European countries, including EU Member States, candidate countries (Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia) and also Serbia and Montenegro.

Presentations and discussions were held around four main themes:

- Estimations of employment from different sources
- Measuring unemployment in Europe
- Evaluation of labour market policies
- Forecasts and projections of active population and European comparisons.

The French experts made several presentations in the four sessions. There were also contributions from Slovakia, Finland, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Hungary and Poland.

Discussions showed the common aim to harmonise calculation methods of employment statistics in order, in particular, to provide Eurostat with reliable and comparable data to monitor the Lisbon strategy.

Participation in a seminar on censuses

In October 2004, INSEE took part in a seminar organised in Rio de Janeiro by the Statistical Institutes of Brazil and Mexico on alternative methods for population censuses. Most South American countries participated, as well as the United States, Spain and international organisations. South American countries are facing difficulties to carry out general population censuses and therefore are interested in new approaches. In this respect, the new French experience of continuous census organised by rotation in “communes” less than 10000 inhabitants and sampling in towns above that level aroused great interest. Presentations made by France and the US and following discussions showed that there are different possibilities and that countries are at different stages in their reflection.

7. Training sessions

The following multicountry training seminars were organised in CEFIL, the INSEE training Centre, in the area of social statistics.

2000 Population censuses- Central European countries

Employment and informal sector- African countries

2002 Household surveys- African countries



This training session for African statisticians was devoted to household sample surveys, with an important methodological part, discussions around surveys carried out in Africa and exchanges of experiences. It involved not only INSEE experts but also specialists from Afristat, the Research Institute for Development and DIAL, Research Centre on economy of development.

2003 Use of administrative sources in social statistics- Central European countries

This training session was a kind of follow-up and deepening, in the field of social statistics, of topics dealt with in 2002 in an international 3-day seminar on the use of administrative sources in statistics. It covered mostly the use of administrative sources for employment, unemployment and income statistics.

2004 Concepts and measurement of inequality and poverty- Central European and Balkan countries

This is a new kind of training session organised by INSEE as an experiment following Eurostat's request to take over some activities organised previously within the framework of the Training programme of European Statisticians. Its duration was four days. It encompassed both theoretical aspects and case studies.

8. Projects for 2005

Training session for African statisticians on poverty measurement and monitoring

This two-week training session will be organised in CEFIL, with contributions of INSEE, Afristat, and possibly other international or regional organisations.

Seminar for TACIS countries on statistics on living conditions and measurement of poverty

The objectives of this new seminar will be:

- To make statisticians from these countries aware of methodological approaches of poverty measurement;
- To present results of international comparisons of poverty carried out over the recent years;
- To present and discuss ongoing work in TACIS countries in conducting surveys on living conditions and building poverty indicators.

