

Foreword

This newsletter is the fourth issue of International Consulting News published by Statistics Finland since 2005. The current issue contains an account of our activities within technical co-operation in 2007 and takes some perspectives into coming years.

In 2007, Statistics Finland was involved in 26 international consulting projects or activities. The number of activities was slightly down on previous years. Projects were in transition, some had just finished and new ones were under preparation. The integration process of new EU member states also proceeded quickly thanks to the huge amount of work done by our colleagues in these countries. Due to this positive development the need for technical support in this area was not as urgent as before. Domestic engagements restricted the availability of our experts for international consulting and to some extent our participation in new projects as well.

Possibilities of allocating the Finnish government's development aid appropriations for statistical projects have been discussed for some time. At the end of 2007, a protocol defining co-operation principles with view to possible future projects was signed between the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Statistics Finland. The first activity within this framework was carried out in April 2008 to identify co-operative areas for strengthening the monitoring and evaluation of poverty at the Central Statistical Authority of Ethiopia.

Public Finance Statistics in Croatia

Statistics Finland and the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) of the Republic of Croatia completed successfully the Twinning project on Public Finance Statistics.

The project was implemented between February 2006 and February 2008 co-operatively with Statistics Denmark as a junior partner as well as with experts from Statistics Sweden. The two

other active Croatian partners were the Croatian National Bank and Ministry of Finance.

The first outcome from the project was a signed agreement on co-operation in public finance statistics between the three compilers in Croatia. The Croatian Central Bureau of Statistics, National Bank and Ministry of Finance now share the responsibilities in the area. It is equally important that the agreement contains detailed information about data flow between these three institutions.

The project enhanced and strengthened the application of the methods recorded in the European statistical manual ESA95, thereby making Croatian key statistical figures (government sector budget deficit and debt, EMU criteria) increasingly comparable with corresponding statistics in EU member states. Classification of the Croatian economy into sectors according to European practices was a crucial achievement of the project. Recording of taxes, capital injections, privatisation and e.g. guarantees in the ESA95 system of national accounts was also on the agenda.

In most cases the short term visits of EU experts involved both training and compilation of statistics. Steps were taken to develop time series databases and publishing of data, especially at the CBS. Representatives of all three institutions made study visits to Finland and Denmark.

All this fosters strongly Croatia's ability to fulfil its obligations in public finance statistics, both for national needs and evaluations of the sustainability of economies at the European level.



Achievements of the project were reviewed during the Final Seminar in Zagreb on 21 January 2008.

Activities with Russia

The project on the harmonisation of the consumer price index (CPI) within the EU Tacis 9 Statistics Programme was successfully concluded with Rosstat in December. As a result conversion keys were formed between the Russian national CPI and the EU HICP/COICOP classification codes. The Russian CPI for 2004-2007 was also calculated by the twelve main COICOP headings. The project gave to the Russian experts a comprehensive picture of the present EU HICP standards, the definitions and calculation methods of the consumer price index, as well as of core inflation and the cost of living index.

Statistics Finland also participated in an EU Tacis project on business registers. The project was led by DESTATIS.

Eight actions were carried out in 2007 within the bilateral co-operation programme of Statistics Finland and Rosstat, five in Russia and three in Finland. They covered the following fields:

- *Environment statistics*: emissions of greenhouse gases, expenditure on environmental protection;
- *National accounts*: national wealth statistics, institutional sectors;
- *Price statistics*: producer prices in construction;
- *Structural business statistics*;
- *Quality issues*: process-based statistical planning, European Statistics Code of Practice, professional ethics in statistics;
- *Classifications*: NACE, CPA;
- *Information technology*: development of data collection methods, processes and dissemination.

A programme of bilateral actions for 2008-2009 has been prepared and will be signed in May.

Other activities

In *Turkey*, an EU project “Upgrading the Statistical System of Turkey, USST 2” started at the end of 2007. The project was awarded to a consortium led by the ICON Institute with national statistical institutes of Finland, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Lithuania and the Czech Republic as its members. Finnish

experts on business registers, business statistics, population statistics and environmental statistics will be available for the project.

The World Bank has granted *Ukraine* a loan for the development of statistics. A consortium, led by French Adetef, in which Statistics Finland is one of the members was awarded the tender to implement the project. Statistics Finland is principally responsible for environmental and energy statistics, but will also offer its expertise on a smaller scale in other areas.

In 2007, Statistics Finland joined four new Twinning projects. Two projects started with the Central Bureau of Statistics of *Croatia*, one led by Germany and one by Denmark. The aim of these projects is to improve the compliance of Croatian statistics with the requirements of EU legislation. In *Bulgaria*, a Twinning project led by Germany has also just started on sustainable development of the national statistical system. Statistics Denmark is currently preparing a new Twinning project in *Egypt*. Finnish experts in various fields will participate in these projects.

Besides the ones listed above, Statistics Finland also participated in other Twinning projects completed in 2007: in *Latvia*, in a Danish project on planning and administrative matters, and in a German project on quality issues.

Smaller scale activities were also run with various countries and partners in the course of the year. In the *Balkans*, Statistics Finland participated in an EU project on labour cost statistics, in *Lithuania* in project on statistical literacy and user skills, and on the labour cost index, and in *Bulgaria* in one on register data. *Turkish* colleagues visited Finland to study statistics on public sector financing and input-output statistics. A visit to study producer price indices was hosted from *Hungary*. A group of experts from *Kazakhstan* visited to study quarterly national accounts and *Israeli* experts were familiarised with Finnish migration statistics and register-based population census system.

