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news from Istat technical cooperation



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focusing on...

Cooperation with Albania

Since 1993 Istat has been collaborating with the Statistical Institute of Albania to facilitate its progressive integration in the European statistical system, making this relationship the most stable and longer of Istat entire technical cooperation life.

Albania is now at a critical juncture in its commitment to European Union membership. For this reason, opportunities and challenges for cooperation and stronger relations with EU have been growing further in last years. One of them is represented by the IPA 2007 EU Project "Alignment of Albanian Statistics with the EU Standards". The project, supported by the European Commission, started on 23 March 2010 and it is implemented by a Consortium led by Istat, including Statistics Sweden and MIPA as partners. Its beneficiary is the National Statistical Institute of Albania (INSTAT). The main goal consists in strengthening the economic statistical system, in order to create in the country the right conditions to define and implement sound and effective macro-economic and fiscal policies. Specific tasks can be resumed within 3 main key components:

- national accounts, for achieving improvements in the GDP estimation;
- economic census and business register, with the goal of updating the information system on enterprises and local units;

- agriculture census, in order to modernize and to update agriculture statistics and to feed the statistical farm register.

The project is planned to end on 23 December 2012.

Among these components, the economic census was a necessary step, since in Albania information from administrative sources concerning enterprises and local units are still quite poor. Its main goals were:

- the improvement of information regarding the correct identification of firms, including their location on the territory (complete address, GIS coordinates)
- the update of the main business register data (age of the firm, legal form, main and secondary economic activities according to NACE Rev.1.1 and NACE Rev.2 classifications, employment class);
- to pick up data on incomes, costs, investments and value added of firms, which play a crucial role as regards the National Accounts needs;
- to collect data on local units, in order to build the local unit register - fully integrated into the business register - which is the basis for calculation of regional indicators.

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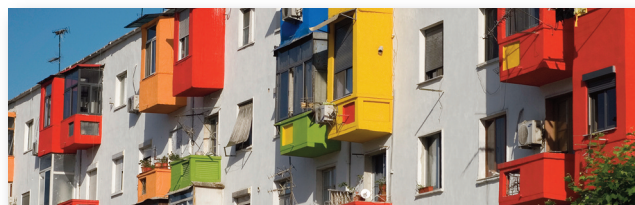
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The 2010 Economic Census of Albania



The census, carried out by INSTAT in November and December 2010 under the supervision of the Central Census Commission, is based on the Law no. 9180 (05/02/2004) "For official statistics", article 3, and the Census Law n.10202 (17/12/2009), which regulates its organization and realization. The Law for official statistics also guarantees data confidentiality. The census covered all the active non-agricultural enterprises listed in the starting business register updated to 2009, which exercised the activity in the Albanian territory and had a proper identification code (NIPT), as derived from the General Directorate of Taxation (GDT) and the National registration Centre (NRC). The Census also included Public Administrations, Non Profit Organizations and International Organizations. The financial support was supplied by the IPA Project, the Swedish Cooperation (SIDA) and the Albanian Government. Provisional results were made available in June 2011 and were used for updating the business register to 2010, while final results have been released in January 2012.

because containing too many missing or not coherent data. Partial non response rates were relatively low and ranged from 9,5% of questionnaires for the variable "Status" (active, not active, sleeping) to 17,2% for the variable "Incomes class". Average partial non response rates were very changeable depending on the region, ranging from 6,6% in Berat region to 20,5% in Tirana region.

On the basis of census results, up to 1 October 2010 the

Roberto Gismondi



Team Leader EU project "Alignment of Albanian Statistics to EU standards"



Albania

Capital: TIRANA
 Surface 28.748 km²
 Population (000) 2,831,741*
 GDP crt.p. (Million Lek) 1,151,020**
 GDP per capita (000 Lek) 360***
 Source: INSTAT website

*Preliminary results
 Census 01 October 2011
 **8,716 (million €)
 ***2,728 (€)



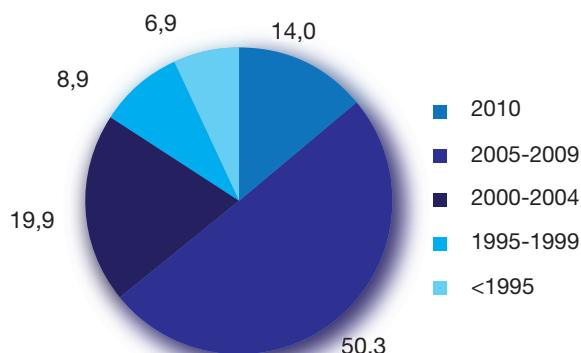
Contents of the questionnaire and of manuals for field staff, as well as the overall organization of field activities were fully defined after two pilot actions carried in December 2009 and June 2010. The final 12 pages questionnaire was grouped in three parts: structural enterprise data referred to October 2010 (identification, address, date of creation, status of activity, economic activity description, employment and turnover classes), balance sheet data referred to 2009 and local unit data. The questionnaire was printed according to specific

standards which could guarantee a successful use of the optical reading system (scanning). The interviews were carried out by about 2.000 enumerators, supported by 147 controllers and 50 supervisors.

In order to update the business register, the main structural data derived from the census – among which the most important one was the status of activity – have been integrated with information from the main available additional sources, such as other statistical surveys, GDT and NRC.

MAIN RESULTS

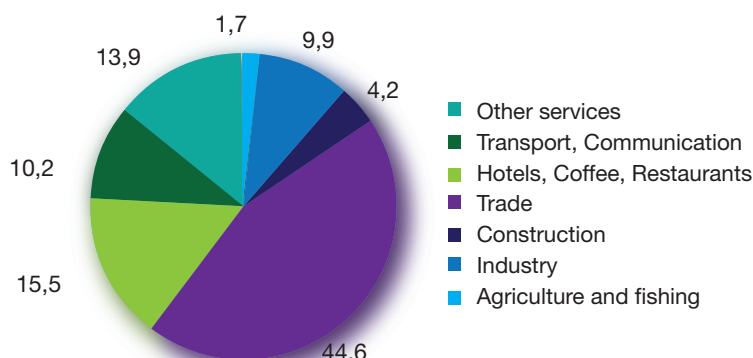
As a final result, 116.655 questionnaires have been scanned, of which 44.000 (37,7%) concerned the Tirana region. Only the 12,5% of questionnaires could not be used,



The Albanian enterprises by year of creation (2010)

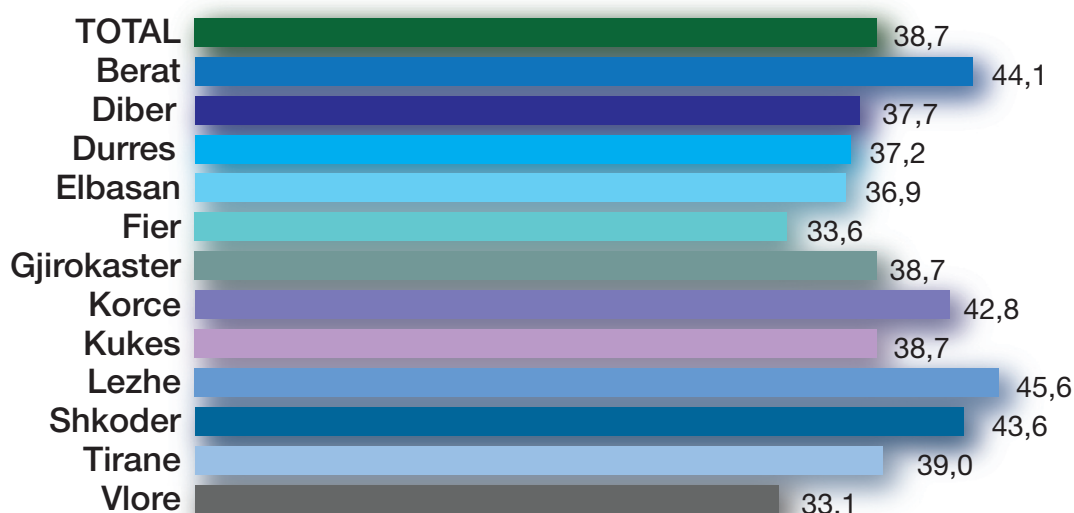
number of active enterprises was 99.722. The business register updated to 31 December 2010 counted for 103.038 active enterprises, since also enterprises born after 1 October were taken into account. The final number of active enterprises excluding public administrations, non-profit and international organizations was 97.436. Among them, the 80,4% had the juridical form of "physical persons". Albanian firms are also very young: at the end of 2010 the 64,3% had been created after 2004 (from 2005 to 2010) and this percentage raised to 66,7% as to physical persons. In particular, more than half of the active enterprises (50,3%) started their activity between 2005 and 2009 (Table 1). The presence of enterprises owned by foreigners is still quite low (only the 1,7% of the total), as well as the average size: even though the census results could not provide specific information on the number of employees, the main outcome is that only the 4,4% of enterprises had more than 9 employees, and this percentage was even smaller as regards the enterprises born after 2004.

Service activities play a central role in the Albanian



The Albanian enterprises by economic activity (2010)





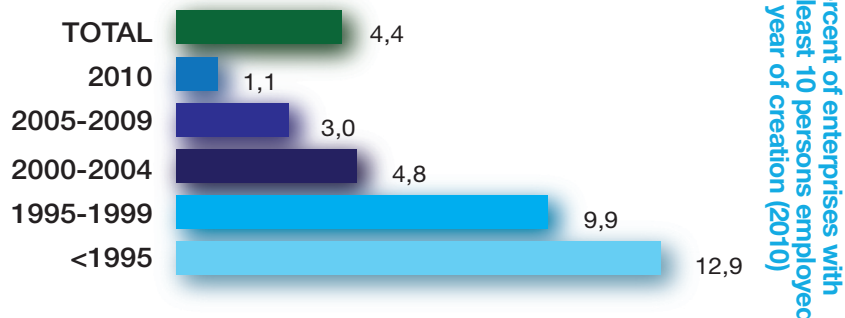
economic context: at the end of 2010, the 84,2% of firms operated in the service sector, among which 44,6% in internal trade, 15,5% such as hotels, coffees, restaurants, 10,2% in transport and communication services and the residual 13,9% within other service activities (Table 2). The share of foreign enterprises (1,7% on average) was larger among producers of goods (3,6%), especially in industry and construction (4,0%). Enterprises which produce goods were also larger than those producing services, since the share of enterprises with at least 10 employees was equal to 13,0% in the former case and to 2,8% in the latter.

From a territorial point of view (Table 3), more than half of enterprises were located in the regions of Tirana (37,9%) and Durrës (12,3%); in Tirana, the percent share of firms owned by foreigners was almost double (3,1%) with respect to the national average; the employment size was quite changeable depending on geographical location, since the share of enterprises with at least 10 employees ranged from 3,5% in the region of Berat to 9,2% in the region of Kukës. The participation of women at work was 38,7% on average, with the highest shares in the regions of Lezhë (45,6%), Berat (44,1%) and Shkodër (43,6%).

PERSPECTIVE CONCLUSIONS

The further step ahead will consist in the implementation of a strategy for updating registers in non census years. The IPA Project already provided technical assistance aimed at defining the best strategy, but additional efforts are needed in order to tackle successfully this issue.

The economic census was a fundamental challenge towards the construction of a modern statistical system. However, in



order to fill the actual gap with the current EU standards, INSTAT will require from Albania more human and financial resources and a more comprehensive Statistical Program. Moreover, communication and integration with other relevant administrative bodies need to be significantly improved.

Table 1: Number of active enterprises in Albania (31/12/2010) by start of activity (*)

Start of activity	Enterprises		Foreigner ownership		With ≥ 10 employees	
	Number	Num.%	Number	Share%	Number	Share %
Total	97,436	100.0	1,618	1.7	4,303	4.4
2010	13,629	14.0	224	1.6	154	1.1
2005-2009	48,993	50.3	1,033	2.1	1,478	3.0
2000-2004	19,349	19.9	157	0.8	937	4.8
1995-1999	8,713	8.9	142	1.6	863	9.9
<1995	6,752	6.9	62	0.9	871	12.9

(*) Excluding Public administrations, Non-profit organizations, International organizations



**Table 2: Number of active enterprises in Albania (31/12/2010)
by economic activity (*)**

Economic activity	Enterprises		Foreign ownership		With ≥ 10 employees	
	Number	Num. %	Number	Share %	Number	Share %
Total	97,436	100.0	1,618	1.7	4,303	4.4
Producers of goods	15,408	15.8	554	3.6	2,008	13.0
Agriculture and fishing	1,627	1.7	4	0.2	51	3.1
Industry	9,686	9.9	388	4.0	1,021	10.5
Construction	4,095	4.2	162	4.0	936	22.9
Producers of services	82,028	84.2	1,064	1.3	2,295	2.8
Trade	43,425	44.6	484	1.1	699	1.6
Hotels, Coffee, Restaurants	15,108	15.5	77	0.5	146	1.0
Transport, Communication	9,952	10.2	86	0.9	207	2.1
Other services	13,543	13.9	417	3.1	1,243	9.2

(*) Excluding Public administrations, Non-profit organizations, International organizations

**Table 3: Number of active enterprises in Albania (31/12/2010)
by Region (*)**

Region	Enterprises		% share with foreign ownership	% share with ≥ 10 employees	% share of female employees
	Number	Number %			
Total	97,436	100.0	1.7	4.4	38.7
Berat	4,223	4.3	0.3	3.5	44.1
Dibër	1,746	1.8	0.2	6.3	37.7
Durrës	11,983	12.3	1.5	3.8	37.2
Elbasan	6,664	6.8	0.6	3.9	36.9
Fier	9,113	9.4	0.4	3.7	33.6
Gjirokastër	2,809	2.9	0.7	5.3	38.7
Korçë	6,425	6.6	0.9	3.8	42.8
Kukës	830	0.9	0.6	9.2	38.7
Lezhë	2,681	2.8	0.6	4.8	45.6
Shkodër	5,942	6.1	0.8	4.1	43.6
Tiranë	36,912	37.9	3.1	5.0	39.0
Vlorë	8,108	8.3	0.9	3.7	33.1

(*) Excluding Public administrations, Non-profit organizations, International organizations



François Begeot
Head of the Section for
Economic Reform and
Infrastructure at the
Delegation of the
European Union to
Albania



interview with François Begeot



Albania towards EU: the challenge for statistics

by
Salvatore Favazza
Istat

You have a statistical background combined with a large experience in the Balkan countries: how do you see the role of statistics in the accession process? For Albania in particular, which are in your opinion the major needs still to be supported along this process?

The need of statistics is a requirement of all developed society. It is nowadays simply not possible to live and govern without good statistics to monitor the changes of the economy, society, environment, mobility, etc... The Balkans region and Albania are heavily supported by the European Union, in particular Eurostat, through IPA, the programme for Pre-Accession. The aim of this assistance is to create a viable statistical system which needs to meet the main principles of the official statistics. Attention is given to the professional independence from political and other external interference in developing, producing and disseminating statistics. This must be specify by law in line with the European Statistics Code of Practice.

European standards and methodologies, new surveys and statistical fields in accordance with European needs are also introduced in view of the production of comparable data. The challenge is to create a statistical culture respecting those principles, giving to the users the knowledge of a correct reading and interpretation of the results. Statistics is at the same time part of the process (chap 18) with an important acquis to be transposed and implemented, and a tool to monitor the process of accession by ensuring a production of comparable data to base the accession discussion on. Albania is well on track and received substantial support over the last 5 years by the EU and other donors (Sida, Swiss Cooperation, IMF, UNFPA, etc...) as well as Eurostat and some of the EU statistical offices. Obviously, some work remain to be carry out, especially for ensuring the sustainability of important surveys (Labor Force, Agriculture, Household Budget, etc,...), on Quarterly Account Statistics and on data dissemination .

Adoption of the acquis communautaire and its transposition into national institutional set-up is a long and extensive process: to what extent statistical activities, and particularly Censuses, can support the country's economic and social progress towards the EU?

The adoption of acquis communautaire is a huge effort because it covers almost all sectors. However, the real challenge is not the adoption and alignment of the new laws but the implementation and the proper enforcement of all these measures in the day-to-day life of the citizens. Here statistics can play a key role by given to the government the current picture of the economic, financial and social situation of the country as well as an assessment on the state of implementation. In this respect, censuses are fundamental tools as they give a photography at a given moment of the population and its main characteristics at all the geographical level of the country. This is a valuable assets of the censuses, especially to define regional policies. The other big advantage is to update the sample frameworks necessary to determine the participants to surveys such as LFS, SILC, HBS, Time use, agriculture surveys, et...with increased accuracy. Based on a more credible basis, the policies can be better developed and the Government can monitor more closely their progress and/or difficulties.

The EU, in the last years, has been stressing and supporting the decentralization process with the recipient countries. How do you see the role of the EU Delegations within this context as refers to technical cooperation programs?

In the countries under the responsibility of the General Directorate for Enlargement (Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia which should join the EU in July 2013, Iceland , the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey) the decentralized management system responds to the needs to prepare the future Member States to cope



with the challenge of the management of EU public money. It is therefore one of the most important duty of the pre-accession period. The management of funds is linked with several key issues: respect of the rule of law, transparency in the process of award of EU tender, tolerance zero for corruption and an administrative capacity able to guarantee a sound and fair management through open tender procedures.

It is therefore a long and demanding process from the side of the beneficiary which require from the candidates countries and potential candidates a sustainable efforts to meet the conditions for a decentralized management. However, during all the time before accession, the Delegations of the European Union in those countries continues to closely support the national authorities and give an ex-ante visa before each step of the procedure. It is for us the opportunity to still advice and to verify the ability of the country to cope with their future commitments.

I would like to stress that when the management is centralised which means that the Delegation of the European Union is the contracting authority, the Beneficiary is closely associated with the management of the funds by being observer in the tender procedures and on the follow-up of the implementation.

In both ways, the Delegation of the European Union has a crucial role to play. Our work in Albania, which is currently under the centralised management, is preparing the passage to the decentralised management. This is already advanced through specific technical assistance projects and thanks to the dedication by the national authorities in training competent staff and giving the necessary financial resources.

As you guess, the workload of the Delegation will still be heavy but it is a successful evolution when a beneficiary qualified for its own responsibility. It means that we did our job.

The decentralised management system is already successfully in force in Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey.

According to the last contractual changes foreseen by DEVCO promoting large themes cooperation projects and programs, how do you see the role of a "minor" sector such as Statistics in the near future? The process standardization between organisations (international and/or national) inspires and at the same time benefits from DEVCO wants to promote more ownership of the Beneficiary to program and implement the EU fundings. Therefore, the project based approach will give the way for a broader thinking which will include a stronger strategic vision on the development of the different sectors such as public administration reform, transport, energy, justice and home affairs, etc.... The authorities will need to prepare multi-annual strategies per sectors in coherence with their budgetary resources and planning. The Beneficiaries would also have to take a strong care of donor coordination to use efficiently its assistance. In that respect, Statistics, - which is not a "minor" sector - may get all its place depending on the strategic vision and the consistency towards other priorities.



interview with
François Begeot



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Albania

Support for the alignment of Albanian Statistics with EU standards

Implemented by: Istat (main contractor), Statistics Sweden, MIPA
 Financed by: European Commission
 Duration: March 2010 - December 2012

The objective of the project is the reinforcement of INSTAT capacities in National Accounts, the implementation of the economic census of non-agricultural enterprises and the census of agricultural holdings.

In January 2012 final results of the economic census were released. The Census of Agricultural Holdings has been postponed to October 2012, and all activities planned for its implementation are well underway.

Bosnia Herzegovina

EU Twinning: Support to the State and Entity Statistical Institutions, phase V

Implemented by: Statistics Denmark (main contractor), Destatis, Istat, Statistics Finland and Statistics Lithuania
 Financed by: European Commission

Duration: September 2011 - September 2013

The twinning project focused on business statistics, analysis of the Extended Household Budget Survey and institutional capacity building. Activities have already been carried out in all the components, involving all the three statistical institutions of the country. Istat contribution mainly focuses on EHBS and construction sector.

Kosovo

Technical assistance to the Statistical Office of Kosovo for the preparation of Population and Housing Census (EU-CEP2011)

Implemented by: Istat (main contractor), CIRPS-Sapienza University of Rome, ICON-Institute Public Sector and Rrota.
 Financed by: European Commission
 Duration: May 2010 - November 2012

The project aims at the improvement of the capacity of the Statistical Office of Kosovo (SOK) for the preparation and implementation of the first Population and Housing Census of the Independent Kosovo and for the dissemination of its results.

During the current period the data

editing and imputation has been finalised in order to create a database of cleaned data to be utilised for the data analysis and as main basis for the data warehouse. In the same time, the communication and outreach components are working on the preparation of the necessary tools for the dissemination of the results foreseen for September 21st.

Mediterranean

Statistical cooperation in the Mediterranean Region (MedStat -Phase III)

Implemented by: Adetef (main contractor), INSEE (France), ISTAT (Italy), ONS (UK), INE (Spain), INE (Portugal) KSH (Hungary), Statistics Lithuania, InWent (Germany), ICON-Institut (Germany), Sogeti (Luxembourg) DOS (Jordan), HCP-DS (Morocco)

Financed by: European Commission
 Duration: April 2010 - December 2013

The project aims to further strengthen national statistical systems of beneficiary countries and to promote harmonisation with EU and international standards in the six thematic sectors: agriculture, energy, migration, social statistics, transport, trade and balance of payments, plus two horizontal sectors, training and dissemination.

Within the component Agriculture, Istat has been selected for the workshop on 'Improving Agricultural Price Statistics of the Mediterranean Partner Countries', hosted in its premises in Rome from 13 to 16 February 2012.

The Gambia

Assessment of a survey on migration

Implemented by: Istat
 Financed by: MIEUX
 Duration: October 2011 - December 2012

A workshop on migration data analysis was prepared and delivered. The aim of this activity was to strengthen the capacities of the national authorities to consolidate and analyze migration data information. The training focused on the following issues: institutions dealing with consolidation and analysis of the data collected by the Migration and Urbanization Survey (2009); data harmonization, and inter-connectivity with other socio-economic factors and indicators; use of data for developing effective migration policies and formulating policy priorities and objectives. The workshop was also based on the

first results in terms of statistical table and graphs of the above mentioned survey, which gave the opportunity to practice, discuss and work together with the participants.

Cape Verde

A mission of Istat experts was carried out from 12 to 15 March with the goal to support INE and the Ministry of Agriculture in the design and implementation of a development strategy for the agricultural sector in the framework of the activities aimed at preparing and updating the new national statistical strategy for the country. In the wider frame of the country national plan for development as laid down in the third Document de stratégie de croissance et de réduction de la pauvreté and the related Statistical Agenda 2012 - 2016, it is essential to include and develop strategies for the reinforcement of the sector. New emerging information needs and requirements will also derive from the country passage to the status of middle-income country, adhesion to WTO and consequent access to capital market. Thus, there is urgent need to enhance the capability of the whole National Statistical System in the production of statistical information on the agricultural sector - mainly for estimation of agricultural production and production prices - and to foster integration and coordination with INE for the decision and agreement of priorities and, as recommended by the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics, on at least a minimum set of information, reliable and exhaustive, to be regularly provided to the country.

Vietnam

Support to the General Statistical Office (GSO) on the LFS time series

Implemented by: Istat
 Financed by: ILO
 Duration: October 2011 - July 2012

ILO office in Hanoi has requested Istat assistance to support the General Statistical Office (GSO) of Viet Nam in the reconstruction of the Labour Force time series 1997 - 2010 and, assist the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) to establish an Information System on Labour Market. A first interim report for the reconstruction of the Labour Force time series has been delivered in May 2012. assurance.



13 - 16 February: delegation from Mediterranean Partners Countries on "**Energy balance, Renewable energies and energy efficiency indicators**", in collaboration with Adetef, in the framework of the MEDSTAT III - Energy sector.

14 - 16 March: delegation from the statistical institute of Estonia, on "**Environment accounts and air emissions**" in the framework of the activities of the Eurostat Grant Agreement on "**Air emissions and Environmental Taxes Accounts**".

26 - 27 March: delegation from Asean Member States on "**The management of statistical offices in helping implement harmonization of community statistics and the building of national statistical systems**" in the framework of the activities of the EU-ASEAN Statistical Capacity Building (EASCAB) Program.

16 – 19 April: delegation from INSTAT – Albania in the framework of the project **Support for the alignment of Albanian Statistics with EU standards for a study visit on best practices for compiling national accounts in Italy**.

18 May: delegation from **Statistics Sweden regional office for the Balkans** to discuss possible fields of cooperation for training activities for NSIs staff from then region. Several training models have been discussed, in particular the possibility to develop medium term courses on statistics and survey techniques.

22 - 25 May: delegation from the Serbian Statistical Office to discuss about the "**economic tendency survey**" in the framework of the activities of the Sida-funded national project.



In partnership with...

Mexico - INEGI Duration: June 2012 - June 2015

The Memorandum of Understanding with the National Statistics and Geography Institute (INEGI) recognizes the importance to adopt and disseminate international standards, norms and classifications, and promotes joint research programs, conferences and workshops. The MoU focuses on social and economic analysis, statistical methodologies, ICT systems and infrastructures, methodologies and tools for strengthening the capacity of the national statistical system with special focus on Regions .

Brasil - Fundacao Getulio Vargas (FGV) Duration: October 2011 - October 2014

The Memorandum of Understanding signed with FGV aims to the promotion of joint research in the field of business cycle analysis, considering in particular the related areas of statistical methods, survey design and sampling techniques.

FAO - Statistics Division Duration: October 2010 - October 2013

The Memorandum of Understanding with FAO recognizes the importance of the establishment of international standards, norms and classifications for the production and dissemination of high quality statistics, and the need to strengthen the cooperation between international and national organizations to enhance the understanding and implementation of statistical methodologies and best practices. The Memorandum promotes joint research on estimation methods, integrated survey frameworks, innovative ways for survey conduction and GPS techniques, focusing on agriculture statistics and rural development.

Tunisia - INS Duration: December 2009 – December 2012

The Memorandum recognizes that an effective cooperation can contribute to the development of statistical systems, to a better understanding and a easier exchange of information particularly through the adoption of international standard methodologies, norms and classifications. The cooperation between the two institutes will focus on sector statistics (social, demographic, economics, environmental and national accounts), statistical methodologies, use of administrative sources and technical tools for statistical programming and coordination. The Memorandum has been signed during the implementation of a EU Twinning project (April 2008 – April 2010) on business statistics and register.





Agreements

China – National Bureau of Statistics

A Memorandum of Understanding with NBS recognizing the importance and the need to strengthen the cooperation between international and national organizations to enhance the understanding and implementation of shared statistical methodologies and best practices is planned to be signed at the beginning of July 2011. The fields of mutual interest identified by the MoU are training, statistical methodologies, ICT and social and economic analysis, production of economic, social and environment statistics, use of administrative sources, Institution building, strengthening of the national statistical system with special focus on regional organisation.

Tenders

Turkey - Technical Assistance for Upgrading the Statistical System of Turkey Programme-Phase III

Istat has participated to the expression of interest for the tender of the above mentioned project, funded by the European Union.

Fields of intervention: business register system, social statistics, environmental statistics and accounts, macroeconomic statistics, business statistics and capacity building and institutional strengthening of TurkStat (the Turkish National Statistical Office).

IPA 2011 - multi-beneficiary statistical cooperation programme

Istat plans has participated to the expression of interest for the tender of the above mentioned programme funded by the European Union.

Fields of intervention: macroeconomic statistics, price statistics, external trade statistics, environmental statistics, agricultural statistics, social statistics, and business statistics.

Study visits

July 2012: a delegation from the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (SORS) will be hosted for a training course on Regional statistics and GDP

September 2012: visit of a delegation from KAS (Statistical Office of Kosovo) to discuss of the internal organization of Istat and the distribution of the resources among the different departments. The visit will be sponsored by DFID which is supporting KAS with the project on its reorganization and restructuring.

September 3 – 4, 2012: the China Commissioner of the National Bureau of Statistics will visit ISTAT either to sign a Memorandum of Understanding, as well as to discuss methodological issues related to Price statistics, Communication and dissemination, and possible cooperation in training activities.

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