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**STATISTICS
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NEW TWINNING PROJECT IN THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS

On a cold and sunny day in February 2020, representatives of Statistics Finland, Statistics Lithuania and Statistics Denmark presented their common proposal for a Twinning Project with Belstat – The National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus. On March 13th, the delegation was officially notified that it had been selected to implement the project.

Back in February the ambition was to start the project with the arrival of the RTA no later than in the middle of April. Starting in April would have allowed Ms. Charlotte Nielsen – the designated RTA – to complete the project programming before the holiday season that is starting in August. This plan has changed as all the involved countries are still under lockdown due to Covid-19. The new aspiration is now to start the project in September.

The project's official title is: "Strengthening the Institutional Capacity of the National Statistics System of the Republic of Belarus". It will focus on five different components. These are: Administrative data, metadata & quality, environmental statistics, access to microdata and various dissemination tools.

Charlotte Nielsen from Statistics Denmark will be the Resident Twinning Adviser (RTA). Charlotte Nielsen was RTA in Israel in an EU-financed Twinning project for 30 months from 2016 to 2018. In Israel, she and the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics also addressed issues of quality, metadata and access to microdata, which makes her very familiar with most of the components in the new Twinning.



Mikael Skovbo – Head of Consulting Division at Statistics Denmark, Charlotte Nielsen RTA, Jesper Ellemose Jensen MS-Project Leader. Photo: Statistics Denmark

THE PROJECT IN MOROCCO GOES ONLINE

Statistics Denmark and the High Commission for Planning in Morocco (HCP) were just about to start the implementation of the first activity of the new three-year Strategic Sector Cooperation project when Covid-19 arrived. This meant that we had to start rethinking our activities and find ways to move them online.

We have now had the first two online sessions and so far the results are positive. We have kick-started the planned work on quality. The focus here is on drafting quality reports for a number of statistical products as well as the formalization of the work on quality in HCP. A series of online sessions are in the making and some of them will include practical workshops like if we were meeting in Rabat.

The second online session focused on IT security, especially during Covid-19 when staff at HCP like in Statistics Denmark works from home. IT security covers a wide range of sub-topics, e.g. how to make sure that staff works within a safe IT environment as well as where and how data is stored and accessed by whom.

Since we are not able to meet our Moroccan colleagues face-to-face at the moment, the second best option to meet online is turning out to be a good alternative. And it is nice to be able to continue the cooperation despite the fact that we cannot meet in person.

This way of working is as new to us as it is to anyone else and we are learning as we go along. There are still many activities to consider how to move online, and some of the more technical ones might prove difficult to transform into an online session. For the time being we are optimistic and look forward to see our Moroccan colleagues online on a regular basis.



The Mausoleum of Mohammed V in Rabat. Photo: Statistics Denmark

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