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INTRODUCTION - INTERNATIONAL CONSULTING AND STATISTICAL CAPACITY BUILDING

In 2023 our portfolio of international projects has offered both consolidation and development. During 2023 Statistics Denmark was involved in two EU-twinning projects in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Jordan respectively; three Strategic Sector Cooperation (SSC) projects financed by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Ghana, Morocco and Vietnam); one EU-financed project with the Turkish Cypriot Community; and a Pan-African Statistics project (PAS II) in Senegal, Tunisia, Rwanda and South Africa. You can read all about the results of our endeavors in the individual projects on the coming pages in this annual report.

2023 has to a large extent been characterized by the developments of a new framework agreement with the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The framework agreement was approved and signed by the Danish Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy in November 2023. The programme reflects the priorities of the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Development Policy Strategy "The World We Share" aiming at a more secure and sustainable world free from poverty. The programme also focuses on the green transition aligning with the Global Climate Action Strategy "A Green and Sustainable World" which sets the direction for Denmark's international climate efforts.

The programme reflects the fact that statistical Institutions are key to democratic, economic and environmental development providing the information that government, parliament, regions, municipalities and other governmental actors use in the democratic dialogue, in policy and decision-making and planning.

In hopeful anticipation that the framework agreement would be signed we started the preparation for the concrete country projects in Ghana and Morocco mid-2023. You can read more about the new framework programme on the coming pages in this report.

In the end of 2023 a new EU-financed twinning project in Bosnia-Herzegovina was approved. The project is implemented in cooperation with the national statistical institutions of Finland, Slovenia and Italy. The project runs from January 2024 to January 2026 and is the fifth in a row of collaboration projects financed by the EU, with Statistics Denmark as the lead agency.

In 2024 we will work intensively with the new framework programme. The new phase for our SSC projects in Ghana and Morocco will start from the beginning of the year. In Vietnam, the existing project will terminate and a new project will be designed. Finally, we will identify and start collaborations with a new - and fourth country - as part of the programme.

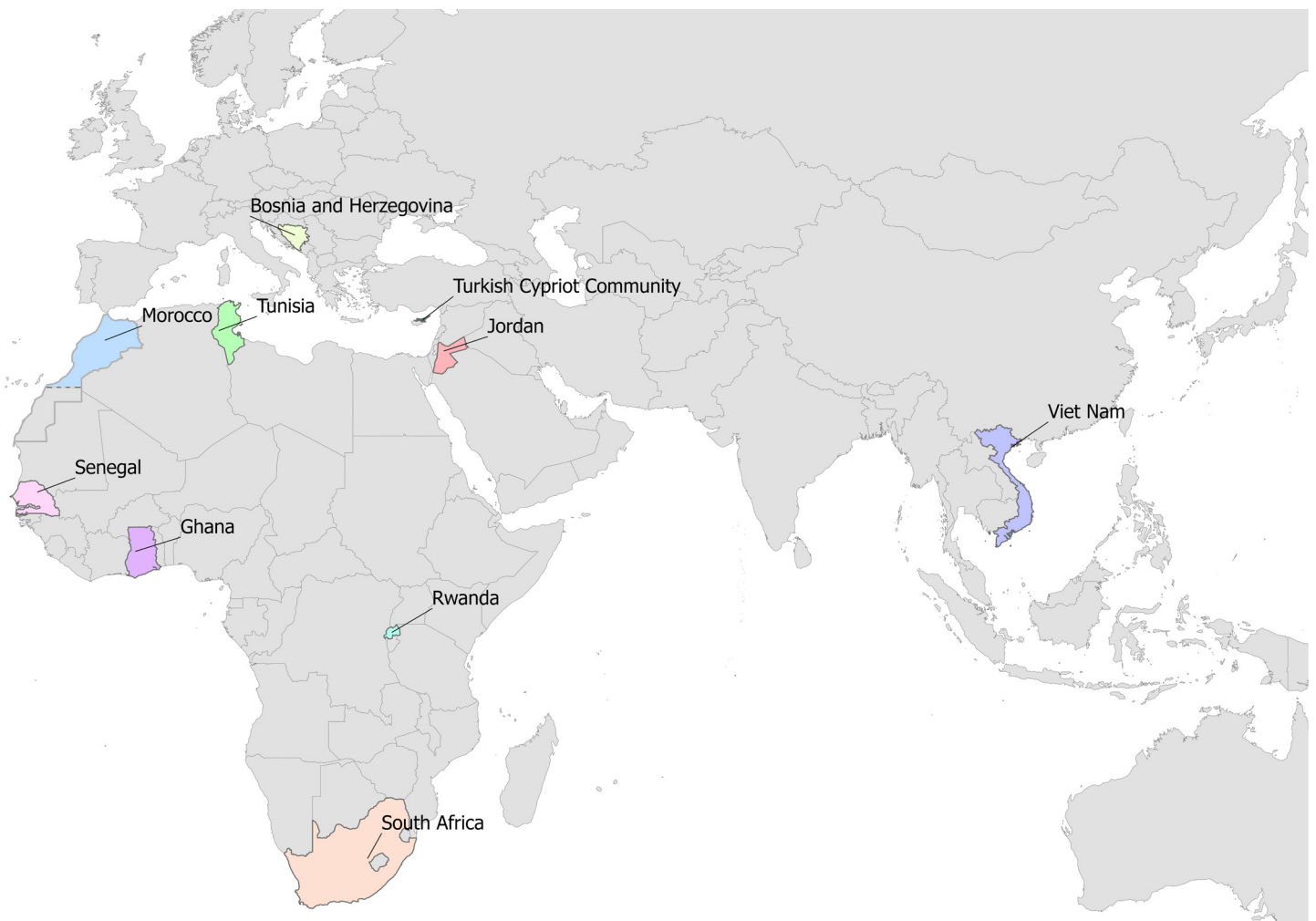
We will also start implementing the new EU twinning project in Bosnia-Herzegovina (phase VI) and continue our existing projects in Jordan, the Turkish Cypriot Community and in the selected countries in Africa under the Pan African Statistics Programme phase II.

We would like to thank our partners, the National Statistical Institutions (NSIs) in all the countries with which we cooperate and our colleagues in other NSIs, for a successful collaboration during 2023. Furthermore, we would like to thank the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the collaboration and support in producing the new Framework Programme. Finally we would like to thank all the stakeholders and institutions that have been engaged in our projects. We look forward to continued strong cooperation, working in favor of the development and communication of official statistics ■



Carsten Zangenberg
Director, Communication, Methodology and Consulting

PROJECT COUNTRIES 2023



Twinning projects - financed by the EU:

- Bosnia-Herzegovina
- Jordan

Strategic Sector Cooperation - financed by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

- Ghana
- Morocco
- Vietnam

Pan African Statistics (PASII) - financed by the EU:

- Senegal,
- Tunisia
- Rwanda
- South Africa

Other technical assistance - financed by the EU)

- Turkish Cypriot Community

NEW FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME 2024-2027

In November 2023, the Danish Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy signed and endorsed a new framework agreement on Strategic Sector Cooperation (SSC) between Statistics Denmark and the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This second phase covers the period from 2024-2027 with a budget of DKK 46.9 million and will among other initiatives include four recipient countries.

Moving towards a just green transition

With the new framework agreement Statistics Denmark will work to support decision-making and progress on the just green transition in partner countries to ensure that it is based on a strong evidence based practice and is more relevant, effective and equitable.

Statistics Denmark will work with three strategic outcomes:

1. strengthening technical capacity
2. supporting a just green transition, and
3. strengthening public-private partnerships.

The first outcome is much in line with traditional capacity building activities within the area of statistics. It is largely focused on statistics supporting a just green transition including the compilation of the System of Environmental Economic Accounts (SEEA) and the fundamental statistics needed to establish these accounts. SEEA enables us to see how our environment and economy interact and thus allow decision-makers to have a solid basis for coming decisions. They also enable citizens to follow progress, and ensure that all countries can compare progress - or the opposite - using the same standards.

Outcome two requires efforts that are more diplomatic and strategic in nature with the aim of establishing

“The green transition creates a high demand for reliable, consistent and accessible statistics on the economy and the environment – and not least on their interlinkages. Statistics Denmark has many years of experience in producing environmental-economic accounts to cover this demand. In the SSC projects, we aim to share not only our know-how on compiling the accounts, based on international standards – but also on how to cooperate with national stakeholders, like data providers and expert users.”

*Ingeborg Vind, Executive chief consultant,
Green National Accounts*

relationships with and between stakeholders in society and ensure that NSIs are seen as trusted data providers. To succeed, Statistics Denmark work closely with the Danish Embassies in our partner countries.

Outcome three aims at promoting Danish societal solutions that have been developed through partnerships between the public and private sector. Solutions that either directly or indirectly could have an impact on the quality, the speed and efficiency in the production of statistics. Which then ultimately can support a just green transition.

“With rapidly changing IT technology, it is becoming more and more relevant to look at private-public partnerships for solutions. These kind of partnerships are a way to speed up the digitalisation of society and consequently improve the speediness and availability of micro data that can be used in the statistical production. Here Statistics Denmark will profit from years of engagement with private companies and contractors being able to transfer this knowledge to our partners in the framework programme.”

*Mikael Skovbo, Head of Division,
International Consulting*

The emerging country project portfolio

Statistics Denmark will continue to work with the NSIs in Ghana, Morocco and Vietnam. We begin the implementation of phase II in Ghana and Morocco in January 2024. With Vietnam entering Phase II in January 2025. The selection process for including a fourth country has been initiated and the new country is intended to enter the programme in the beginning of 2025 after an inception phase in 2024.

Each of the three existing project countries in the SSC share common features and challenges in their statistical productions that call for core competencies of Statistics Denmark.

The activities in the individual countries will strive to address the following challenges:

- All countries are facing challenges caused by the global climate crisis and data are lacking. The use of more administrative microdata for statistics combined with survey data will increase the efficiency

and assist the society in adapting to and mitigating these challenges and ultimately assist in creating a just green transition.

- The partner NSIs are mature for an IT and digitalisation strategy and committed to the digitalisation of statistical production processes. But exploiting microdata in an efficient way for statistical purposes requires that the overall digitalisation of society is at a certain level and that both data-owners and governments are involved.
- All countries have a challenge to ensure inter-institutional coordination and collaboration within the national statistical systems. This requires cooperation built on trust and relationships where institutions recognise the value of data sharing.
- All countries are at an early stage in implementing the SEEA. But there is support and commitment to speed up the process.

Activities in the two existing SSC project countries Ghana and Morocco have commenced and are being implemented with the support and assistance from the Danish embassies in Accra and Rabat. Morocco has had a sector advisor in place at the Embassy in Rabat both during phase I and now in phase II. Ghana has had a locally employed Project Coordinator at the Embassy during phase I. A new Danish sector advisor for phase II started at the embassy in Ghana in February 2024.

Collaboration with other SSC projects - a new element

In Denmark, Statistics Denmark cooperates with multiple authorities as the national supplier of independent statistics and data to the society. With the framework agreement, Statistics Denmark has the opportunity to mirror such cooperation. A new element in the framework programme is a budget allocation of DKK 4 million that allows Statistics Denmark to assist other Danish public authorities to include a statistical component in their SSC-projects. Activities (e.g. workshops) could either be in the partner country with experts from Statistics Denmark or in the form of study visits from partner countries to Statistics Denmark

Monitoring, evaluation and learning

Monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes and the impact is an intrinsic part of the programme and is getting even more attention than in the previous programme. Strategic and institutional learning from the implementation of the programme is valuable in order to plan future activities.

“Credible, real-time, and high-quality statistics serve as the cornerstone for well-informed decision-making and evidence-based policy formulation. As the Ambassador of Denmark to Ghana, it is truly gratifying to witness the symbiotic synergy among our collaborative strategic cooperations in sectors such as water, maritime affairs, meteorology, and statistics. These efforts have effectively complemented one another, providing invaluable data for Ghana's development, particularly in the realm of green transitions.”

*Tom Nørring, Ambassador,
Embassy of Denmark, Ghana*

At the beginning of each individual country project, an image survey of the partner institutions in our cooperating countries will be conducted. The image survey can provide information about the NSIs role in society as trusted data providers and how it develops during the projects' lifespan. It will be aimed at key stakeholders i.e. institutional users of statistics produced by the national statistical institutions, data providers and mass media. The survey is to be conducted in the same way in all four SSC countries and will be repeated at the end of phase II.

A new monitoring tool developed by Statistics Denmark called SCATS – Statistical Capacity Assessment Tool and Score - will be used to assess the capacities of our development partners within the core changes targeted in the framework programme. This include assessing organisational, administrative, digital and communication capacities both at the beginning, mid-term and at the final evaluation of the programme ■

Read more about the specific country projects here:

Ghana

<https://www.dst.dk/en/consulting/projects/ghana-2024-2026>

Morocco

<https://www.dst.dk/en/consulting/projects/morocco-2024-2026>

Vietnam

<https://www.dst.dk/en/consulting/projects/ghana-morocco-and-vietnam-2019-2024>

GHANA

OBJECTIVE

The Strategic Sector Cooperation between Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), Statistics Denmark (SD) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of Denmark lays down the foundation for a statistical system that should ultimately be based on fewer surveys, while at the same time ensuring more data and higher data quality. This is to strengthen the foundation for evidence-based decision-making in Ghana and improving monitoring and reporting of the UN SDGs.

Key achievements in 2020-2023

Administrative microdata

During the first phase, efforts focused on exploring the use of administrative microdata, particularly in connection with the new Ghana card similar to the Danish health insurance certificate. It was assessed how to transfer data from the Birth and Deaths Registry and the National Identification Authority (NIA) to GSS. Later, GSS initiated a pilot with the NIA, Ministry of Education, and Ghana Education Service. Access to already existing administrative microdata is a valuable and cost effective source for an efficient production of statistics and can be a leap forward in terms of providing the society with detailed, reliable and timely statistics.

Study visit to Denmark

Besides the collaboration with the above-mentioned stakeholders, collaborations with the National Statistical System (NSS) included a technical delegation to Denmark from the Birth and Death Registry to learn about the Danish Civil Registration Number. The registry aims to adapt Danish practices for the success of the Community Population Register Project in Ghana.

Digitalization

Digitalization of the society is of great importance to working with administrative data and thus facilitating the green transition. Phase I prioritized digitalization with a high-level delegation from the Vice President of Ghana's team visiting Denmark for a fact-finding mission. The Vice President of Ghana and other major stakeholders showed interest in building an integrated register based system for using administrative microdata for the production of official statistics at GSS. Similarly, the development of a population register was discussed with the Vice President of Ghana's technical team.

A new statistical databank

A new statistical databank called Statsbank, with open statistical data from the 2021 Population and Housing Census was launched in combination with several hackathons for university students. The Statsbank has a potential for creating revenue streams since data is presented in machine-readable form through a web service. During the hackathons, we produced a video about the Statsbank and its opportunities. In a video on water data it was displayed how data from the Statsbank can be of use for climate adaptation and for plans for wastewater treatment.

Following the launch of the Statsbank, trainings on the use of the Statsbank was held for two committees of Parliament and the Research Department of Parliament to ensure that the data is used for evidence-based decision-making.

In 2022, a Data Science Team was formed at GSS and through the project, they have received several trainings and have increased their capacities in the IT programming tool R. The Data Science Team contributed to various publications and the development of the Statsbank and also won the UN Datathon 2023. On our website, a short film is available about the data science team.

PROJECT FACTS

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Project name | Strengthening official statistics in Ghana. |
| Key topics | Use of administrative data sources for statistical production, IT infrastructure, quality management, economic statistics, environmental accounts, dissemination and communication. |
| Partner | Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) |
| Donor | Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) |
| Period | 2020–2023 |

Green Statistics

Experts from Statistics Denmark supported the completion of a green goods and services questionnaire to be included in the business census. The questionnaire is aligned with the system of environmental and economic accounting (SEEA) and is an important stepping-stone in measuring the production and export of environmental friendly goods and services.

Quality Assurance Framework

GSS with support from experts from Statistics Denmark developed a document outlining a data quality framework aimed at ensuring uniformity in data collection methods and methodologies across Ghana.



Woman on the beach, Ghana
Photo: Colourbox

The primary objective of the Data Quality Assurance Framework is to standardize various aspects of statistical data collection and offer guidance to improve data quality and consistency in statistical production. Ultimately, this framework is intended to be applicable to all agencies involved in data collection and production in Ghana, thus extending the project's impact beyond GSS.

Consumer Price Index (CPI)

Statistics Denmark supported GSS in updating the CPI by expanding it from 10 to 16 regions, a task not undertaken since 2012. Experts introduced a new basket of goods and services into GSS's CPI, guided GSS in adjusting and modernizing the index calculations for their CPI, and provided assistance in adopting new software for these calculations.

Communication

The media plays a crucial role in ensuring that statistical information is effectively utilized within society. Hence, a workshop was organized to raise awareness among GSS staff about the workings of media and its influence on their communication of statistical data to the general public.

What's next?

The second phase of the Strategic Sector Cooperation with Ghana started on January 1. In 2024, the focus will remain on exploring administrative microdata opportunities with the pilot on education data and a mapping of existing administrative data in the National Statistical System. Efforts will also continue on green statistics, including the work on green goods and services and co-hosting a conference on the impact of green data. The second phase of the collaboration will further enhance the capabilities of the Data Science Team and key staff at GSS in the programming tools R and Python. Additionally, experts from Statistics Denmark will support the trade team in building and updating the Unit Value Index. ■

“GSS made remarkable progress on auto-generated reports this year, and we came back from our last visit with great ideas on how to optimize our own reports accordingly. We also appreciate their constant hospitality; it is always enjoyable to share a meal of extremely spicy jollof, have a glass of cocopine juice, and discuss the cultural differences in our countries”

*Louise Lunde-Christensen,
Head of Section, DST Consulting*

MOROCCO

OBJECTIVE

The main objective of the strategic sector cooperation between the Moroccan statistical office (HCP), Statistics Denmark (SD) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark (MFA) is to support informed decision-making and ensure that the public debate in Morocco builds upon relevant and easily accessible statistics.

Key achievements in 2020-2023

2023 was the last year of the phase I of the 3-year project, which began in 2020. Due to the Covid pandemic, activities were stalled and the project was extended to the end of 2023 and thus covered a period of 4 years. Here are the main achievements during the whole project period.

IT & Communication strategies

HCP got their first ever IT strategy. The strategy will have considerable impact on the way HCP will be handling the collection, processing and dissemination of statistics working on a common platform. It will increase both the effectiveness and the quality of the statistics in Morocco and thus create a better and more relevant basis for decision-making.

Experts also assisted in the finalization of the communication strategy, improvement of the HCP database and the creation of a new web-site which was launched in the fall of 2022. The communication strategy is now being implemented and has given a clear direction for the internal work with communication in HCP. The improvements of the database and the web site has made the access to data easier for all user groups.

Data Management Centre (DMC)

Danish experts have supported HCP's establishment of a data management centre with everything from

the conceptual frame to the practical implementation including the management of an internal access to systems and data. The positive impact on the efficiency, quality and the speed of the statistical production process will be immense, as more data will enter, be processed and published via the DMC.

The use of administrative microdata

This component started up in the spring of 2022 and is still needing some work. The use of microdata will provide Morocco with more granular and reliable data that can improve the quality of statistics and in time give the opportunity to link data from other sources. Ultimately, replacing the decennial population and household surveys will reduce costs significantly.

A new business register and web-based surveys

During 2023, the Moroccan, Danish and Norwegian experts uploaded 350.000 business units to the Statistical Business Register, STATBUS. STATBUS is a generic system developed by Statistics Norway (SSB). The new register will enable HCP to compile more detailed and solid information on Moroccan businesses and they will be able to draw sample frames from the register to use it for the recurring business surveys. The system also makes it possible to reduce the amount of work HCP has to allocate to the annual update of the information on businesses and thus provide the basis for more frequent and reliable statistics to the benefit of the decision-makers and the business society.

The establishment of recurrent web-based business surveys has already increased the efficiency and the response rate to the questionnaires. This has had an overall positive impact on the quality of the published statistics on businesses in Morocco.

You can find a video about the establishment of the SBR in Morocco on our website.

PROJECT FACTS

Project name

Support to Morocco's ongoing efforts to improve the quality and digitalisation of official statistics.

Key topics

Focus is to allow the Moroccan statistical office (HCP) to take advantage of the ongoing digitalisation of the Morocco society in general and the public administration especially. This involves developing a new IT strategy for HCP, electronic data collection, improving the use of administrative data and modernising the statistical business register. Also, quality management and environmental statistics are addressed.

Partner

Haut Commissariat au Plan (HCP).

Donor

Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA)

Period

2020-2023

Water account

In 2022, the green component of the project was initiated with experts from Statistics Denmark and the Danish Environmental Protection Agency. Water scarcity is a serious problem in Morocco and the satellite water account is therefore of high priority both in HCP and in the Moroccan society at large.

The satellite account feeds into the overall System of Environmental-Economic Accounts (SEEA) – the so-called green national accounts. The water account will provide an integrated approach to water monitoring bringing together a wide range of water related statistics into one coherent information system.

Quality Management

HCP and Statistics Denmark have been working on developing a National Quality Assurance Framework (NQAF). It still needs to be adopted and then implemented. It consists of three major areas:

- Producing metadata (data about data): templates and guidelines for quality reports have been developed - 5 quality reports have been prepared and 3 of them published.
- Standardisation: HCP has adopted the internationally acknowledged Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM) which describes and defines the set of business processes needed to produce official statistics. The model will constitute a valuable input to quality audits.
- Quality reviews of statistical products: HCP is considering to adopt the Danish model.

What's next?

In the first year of phase II of the Strategic Sector Cooperation with Morocco priorities will be influenced by the resources that HCP has to allocate to the upcoming decennial population census and household survey in

September 2024.

Emphasis will therefore be put on activities already initiated such as the water account, the business register and quality management. But we will also introduce a new activity aiming at establishing an economic modelling tool similar to the Danish macro-economic model ADAM. The modelling tool will be used to predict economic development trends and calculate the effects of economic and political interventions in Morocco ■



Tower in the Kasbah in Rabat, Morocco
Photo: Klaus Munch Haagensen

“On our mission to Rabat, November 2023, most of our ideas and plans did not work out as planned, which was frustrating. Quite unintended, and to my surprise, our presence on location led to key people from different ministries got to meet and talk. Our enquiries lead to essential insight. For example the fact that there actually was a personal identification number set in place for each sector to avoid using one single national personal identification number. Which completely changes the preconditions for using administrative microdata across sectors. Hence, what appeared as a relatively random and fluffly visit actually turned out to be quite productive”

*Annesofie Thorup Olesen, Head of Section,
Vulnerable Children and Young Persons*

VIETNAM

OBJECTIVE

The overall objective of the Strategic Sector Cooperation project is to contribute to the development of the Vietnamese society by providing adequate and trustworthy statistics, which is built on international standards and trends.

Key achievements in 2023

2023 has shown fruitful progress in all four components of the project. Eight missions in Hanoi were carried out, as well as three study visits to Statistics Denmark. Some of the key activities included:

Population data

Available administrative data that can possibly digitize parts of the Vietnamese population census have been identified, and a test data set from the Ministry of Justice covering microdata from one district within the Thai Nguyen province on vital events (births, deaths, marriages and divorces) has been transmitted to GSO. The success for further steps depends on the cooperation on data sharing with relevant external data owners as well as having the necessary time and resources allocated at GSO for this task. The perspectives look promising. The work carried out contributes to the first steps in Vietnam towards reducing, and eventually phasing out, the existing costly population census which is carried out every tenth year.

Education statistics:

In 2023 a first draft prototype for a Vietnamese integrated student register was developed. The prototype is a standardized small-scale product, which will need to be gradually scaled up in terms of coverage on geography and fields of education. The plan for upscale will be discussed and planned in cooperation with GSO. This

exercise is expected to define the standards and methods in Vietnam on how to digitize the data collections on education statistics – and eventually also on various other statistical domains.

Big data

Test data from the Vietnamese supermarket provider DMX has been assessed and used to develop a prototype of an R-generated system for producing the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The crucial step from here is to clarify minor questions regarding the structure, coherency and quality of the test data, as well as setting up a frequent flow of data for the CPI at GSO.

”Since 2022, we have helped GSO in being acquainted with the use of scanner data for the calculation of the Consumer Price Index. The collaboration with colleagues from GSO has been a big driver. Being on a mission helps you get a much better understanding of the local culture than just being a tourist. Vietnam is very different from Denmark, which is a big inspiration and a lot of fun. Visiting Vietnam and working with colleagues there has been very inspiring. Everyone is very helpful and committed to delivering the best results possible.”

*Thomas Hjorth Jacobsen,
Senior Advisor, Prices and Consumption*

In addition, initial meetings have been held with VN Pay and the road toll system (VETC). It is however yet unclear whether the data owners are willing to cooperate on data sharing for piloting purpose. The work done so far has been an eye opening learning process on how to address the need for data sharing between dataowners

PROJECT FACTS

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Project name | Support to Vietnam’s ongoing efforts to improve the quality of official statistics. |
| Key topics | Inception phase with a view to build a longer-term collaboration around population and migration statistics, education, Big Data and Environmental Accounts. |
| Partner | General Statistics Office of Vietnam (GSO). |
| Funding | Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) |
| Period | 2022 - 2024 |

and GSO for the purpose of producing mutually beneficial statistical indicators.

Environmental statistics

For the purpose of developing energy balances and air emissions statistics in Vietnam, a structured approach and dialogue with key stakeholders on data sharing has been initiated. Experts from GSO and Statistics Denmark have experienced constructive dialogue on the experimental situation of compiling energy accounts based on the energy balance. In addition, questions on how to calculate energy related emissions based on the energy account were discussed. The developments are carried out in cooperation and dialogue with the Vietnamese

Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, and Ministry of Trade and Industry. Within the project, the first draft version of a Vietnamese Energy Account based on international standards and guidelines will be in place.

What's next?

Since the project is scheduled to finish by the end of 2024, the focus for 2024 will be on finalizing the work done within the four subjects as well as designing strategies for a sustainable exit of the project. In total nine missions in Hanoi and two study visits to Statistics Denmark are scheduled to take place during 2024 ■



Rice fields, Vietnam
Photo: Colourbox

TWINNING - A WELL KNOWN COOPERATION MODALITY

The modality was originally designed to prepare and develop government institutions and national legislation to a level compatible with membership of the European Union. At its inception the Twinning instrument was limited to candidate countries. In 2004, the modality was extended to cover EU's Southern and Eastern Neighbours. Either preparing these countries for candidate status or supporting closer political and economic integration with the EU. In 2020 Twinning, as an instrument, was further enlarged to countries and territories covered by EU development policies.

The ultimate goal of Twinning was - and still is - to ensure that the partner countries operate according to European standards.

In the area of statistics, Eurostat issues common European methodologies and defines statistical indicators that must be reported to the EU (Eurostat). When these indicators are aggregated at the European level, it becomes possible to monitor economic and demographic developments in Europe. A prerequisite for informed decision-making and accountability thereby strengthening democracy.

Statistics Denmark has been a major implementer of Twinning projects since the beginning in 1998. Over the years we have taken part in more than 20 different Twinning projects. Covering countries like the Baltic states, Ukraine, the Balkan countries and countries in the Middle East. We have yet to experience the African and Far East countries who have been eligible for Twinning projects since 2020.

From a development perspective, the main defining feature of Twinning projects is that the Theory of Change and the Logical Frame Work is always predefined by the beneficiary and the Contracting Authority.

As the budget is fixed in advance and a part of the EU budget cycle all projects have a strong element of "design to costs". As Statistics Denmark is a relatively small NSI we always team up with one or more member states to implement our projects. It gives our staff the possibility to work closely with colleagues from inside

the European Statistical System and it gives the beneficiary country the benefit of different perspectives from new or older, small or larger EU-member states. As Denmark is heavily dependent on administrative data in our statistical production, we often need to bring in member states with a more survey-oriented production model.

"...a European Union instrument for institutional cooperation between Public Administrations of EU Member States and of beneficiary or partner countries. Twinning projects bring together public sector expertise from EU Member States and beneficiary countries with the aim of achieving concrete mandatory operational results through peer-to-peer activities."

The official definition of twinning, from the homepage of the European Commission - DG NEAR

A major tool in Twinning is study visits to member states. The visits demonstrates how the same statistical products based on a common methodology can be produced in different ways using different IT technologies. Another important aspect is to sensitize the participants to European civil service cultures and ethics ■



EU Commission, the Berlaymont building, Bruxelles
Photo: Colourbox

You can read more about the specific country projects under the twinning-modality here:

Bosnia-Herzegovina

<https://www.dst.dk/en/consulting/projects/bosnia-herzegovina-2024-2026>

Jordan

<https://www.dst.dk/en/consulting/projects/jordan-2022-2024>

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

OBJECTIVE

The project is the fourth Twinning project between Statistics Denmark (SD) and the partners of the National Statistical System (NSS) of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The overall objective is to modernise the NSS and align its products to European standards, thereby underpinning the country's status as an EU candidate country. The project is implemented together with Statistics Sweden and Statistics Finland as official junior partners. ISTAT of Italy also provided experts to the project. Due to BiH's candidate status there is a political imperative to adopt not only national legislation but also to align statistical outputs with the relevant European recommendations and requirements.

Key achievements in 2023

As the project was initially effected by COVID, 2023 was an extremely busy year for the project. Study visits to European member states played an important part in all components exposing the BiH staff to the different ways member states use to compile the same statistical products.

Over this project and the previous Twinning projects in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the national statistical system has come closer to producing all the various statistical indicators required by Eurostat. Therefore, from a technical per-

“I had two visits to Sarajevo and a single visit to Banja Luka working on producer price indices. Adapting to a new system of constraints and opportunities in terms of data, legal framework and the culture was extremely interesting and rewarding. Finding new ways to approach a well-known statistical product was a great learning experience both from a personal and professional perspective. There is still much more work to do in Bosnia-Herzegovina but for the next project I have passed on the challenges to a colleague in the hope that he will get the same positive experience working internationally as I had.”

Nicklas Milton Elversøe, Head of Section, Prices

spective Bosnia-Herzegovina is now closer to European Union membership. And this is the exact *raison d'être* behind Twinning-projects.

Agricultural census

During 2023, the EU Delegation in Bosnia-Herzegovina tendered and entered into a technical assistance contract to implement an agricultural census in 2024. As there are no administrative data on farms and livestock available a pilot census was conducted. The pilot in needed to validate the questionnaire and to refine the sampling frame. The cost of the actual census depends very much on the number of farms and households that needs to be visited (sampled). One of the major questions that needs answering before a census is: “When is a farm a farm? And when is it an extended kitchen garden for self-sufficiency.” To further support the 2024 census the project prepared a long- term roadmap for agricultural statistics creating the foundation for how the different stakeholders shall work together in the future.

Administrative data

Shifting to the use of administrative data is among other items an economic imperative as surveys are becoming increasingly expensive together with a need to reduce the time from publication to dissemination. The focus has been on mapping available data sources and discussing quality issues like “fit for use”. The national

statistical system of Bosnia-Herzegovina will be supported in shifting towards using administrative data by a technical assistance contract, which was tendered and contracted during 2023. As administrative data are used for more and more stati-

PROJECT FACTS

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Project name | Further support to the reform of statistics system in BiH BA 17 IPA ST 01 20 EuropaAid/169772/DD/ACT/BA |
| Key topics | Business Statistics, Balance of Payment, Wages and Taxes. |
| Partner | Statistical System of Bosnia and Herzegovina. |
| Funding | EU – Twinning project |
| Period | 2021–2023 (32 months in total) |

stical products the productivity is supposed to increase and thereby allowing the national statistical system to produce more European compliant statistical products within the same resource allocation. As a first step the statistical system has an overview of all administrative data that can be turned into statistics.

Balance of Payment

Under the project the Central Bank of Bosnia-Herzegovina works with the Bank of Finland on implementing the necessary methodology and data to allow the dissemination for a monthly Balance of Payment. During 2023 the partners made progress in this area but the work will continue into the next Twinning project covering 2024-2025. The Balance of Payment describes the need for foreign currency and lending for a country. In a perfect world all statistics needed to calculate BoP are available on monthly basis – but in the real world this is not the case as statistics with monthly compilation are expensive. Instead quarterly and even yearly data can be deconstructed and used as monthly data.

Let me entertain you

To create awareness on the need for statistics the project worked with the Norwegian professor and TV personality Jo Røislien to give presentations at two universities on the importance of statistics. Often people see statistics as boring, difficult to understand and perhaps even irrelevant for their daily life. By bringing in one of the best communicators of numbers and statistics hopefully helped put the importance of statistics on the agenda and gave the audience a bit of inspiration to take back to their studies.

More than a hundred students attended the lectures and got a new understanding of how statistics can be made both accessible, relevant and interesting.

What's next?

In January 2024, a fifth Twinning project between Statistics Denmark and the Statistical system in Bosnia-Herzegovina commenced. The project has the national

statistical offices of Finland, Italy and Slovenia as official junior partners. Monthly Balance of Payment will continue to be in focus together with business statistics. ICT and Tourism Satellite Accounts are new focus areas in the project. The area of Information and Communication Technology is expected to focus on means for web based data collection. As travel to Bosnia-Herzegovina grows it is planned to compile a Satellite Account of tourism to get an estimate of the economic effects of tourism at the national level ■



Jo Røislien in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Photo: Priredba, Sarajevo

JORDAN

OBJECTIVE

The project is the second EU-Twinning project between Statistics Denmark (SD) and the Department of Statistics of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (DoS). The current project is implemented by the DoS as Beneficiary, Statistics Denmark as lead Member State partner, and the German Federal Statistical Office (Destatis), the Italian National Institute of Statistics (Istat), Statistics Lithuania – State Data Agency as Junior Partners with additional support from Statistics Finland. The overall objective of the project is to strengthen the capacity of Jordan's Department of Statistics to compile, analyse and report statistical data in line with International and European best practices and contribute, to delivering the strategic goals of the statistical system in Jordan.

Key achievements in 2023

In 2023 a wide range of activities took place across all components of the project. Most of the activities have been designed to allow Short Term Experts (STE) from more than one EU Member State (MS) working jointly together in order to expose DoS to different MS's approaches and best practices for the topic addressed. In addition, three study visits to respectively Destatis (Germany), Statistics Finland and Statistics Denmark took place.

An integrated administrative data system

An integrated data model build around a population register, a statistical business register (SBR) and an address register was drawn up and roadmaps for a fully integrated data system in Jordan was outlined based on joint efforts between experts from all participating partners. The roadmap is an essential supporting tool for any further steps to be taken on the project components related to the use of administrative data on businesses and citizens.

Combined population and housing census

As preparation for the population and housing census that will take place in November 2025 different approaches to conduct a combined population and housing census was introduced. The risk, cost, needed time investment and quality was discussed in relation to the maturity level that DoS currently has reached in terms of using administrative data. Based on an initial evaluation of the situation in Jordan STEs from member states concluded the administrative data sources contains a lot of information which could reduce costs and improve the quality of the results in the future Census. But Census 2025 data have to be collected using a complete field collection. However, data from registers, especially from the civil status register, should be used for prefilling and quality checks. The work carried out will to the largest possible extent support the development of a hybrid population census where parts of the collected data derive from existing databases, potentially decreasing the need for manually collected census data in the future.

Statistical Business Registers

UN international guidelines for development and maintenance of a Statistical Business Register (SBR) was introduced in Jordan and a common terminology and definitions was agreed upon. In order to support building

“I have had the opportunity to visit Amman, Jordan four times in the last 18 months as part of my engagements with International Consulting. On each occasion, I served as a short-term expert in the EU-Twinning project at the Department of Statistics. It has consistently been a pleasure engaging with the dedicated staff at the Department of Statistics, discussing crucial matters, and presenting proposals for the organization's advancement.”

Niels Jespersen, Chief Advisor, IT

PROJECT FACTS

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|---------------------|---|
| Project name | Strengthening the capacity of Jordan's Department of Statistics in terms of compilation, analysis and reporting of statistical data in line with International and European best practices. |
| Key topics | Administrative data for Business Statistics and Population Statistics, Small Area Estimations, Missing and Erroneous data. |
| Partner | Department of Statistics of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (DoS) |
| Funding | EU-Twinning project |
| Period | 2022-2024 (24 months in total) |

a SBR in Jordan, STATBUS, a software developed and maintained by the Nordic National Statistical Institutions, was installed on a server at DoS. Local Jordanian administrative microdata has been uploaded to the system and testing of functionalities was initiated. With an operational SBR system in place at DoS, a far more streamlined and transparent processing and use of administrative micro data on business statistics can be in place within a reasonable timeframe.

Training for small area estimation

Basic steps required for Small Area Estimation (SAE) were introduced in Jordan at a conceptual and theoretical level. However, SAE require deep knowledge of inferential methods, modelling, and survey sampling. Therefore additional capacity building in theory and practices in these areas was identified as required skills before moving to the next planned activities in SAE. Training of DoS staff in basic skills needed for the SAE component has been carried out supported by the World Bank. Meanwhile the component has been on hold, and is expected to re-start and accelerate from early 2024. The skills achieved by the staff of DoS will contribute to a general strengthening of the capacity of DoS.

Review of survey methodology

Careful review of current methodology for dealing with missing or erroneous data for surveys has been reviewed. The review focused on process steps that can affect non-response or erroneous data. The guidelines provided by Member State Experts are closely linked to the production steps in the Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM). The review that has already taken place is seen as a crucial foundation for further discussions on how to increase the quality and coverage of surveys in DoS.

Metadata and quality assessment

Based on best practices and international standards standardized templates for reference and structural

metadata, to be used across all domains in DoS, was created in order to move toward a metadata driven production process. The templates are currently in the process of being filled out for all available administrative data in close dialogue with the data owners.

What's next?

In 2024 the project will focus on achieving tangible and sustainable mandatory operational results based on the lessons learned in 2023 in all components of the project ■



Amman Citadel, Jordan
Photo: Peter Bohnstedt Anan Hansen

PAN-AFRICAN STATISTICS PROJECT (PASII)

OBJECTIVE

To support African integration through strengthening the African Statistical System and ensure the use of quality statistical data in the decision-making process and policy monitoring, in order to facilitate monitoring of societal progress in Africa, with a special focus on the social domain.

Key achievements in 2023

The Pan-African statistics project is part of an EU funded program counting two projects headed by Statistics Denmark and INSEE, the French national institute of statistics, respectively. The Danish-lead project supports the production of official statistics within the social domains of education, health, and labour market (SOCSTAF) and counts consortium partners from the National Statistical Institutions (NSIs) of France, Finland, Spain and Poland. Denmark is consortium partner in the French-headed project focusing on support to Statistical Business Registers (SBR) and national accounts.

2022 was the first project year of PAS II and the main focus was on the inception phase. During the fall, communication with relevant NSIs in Africa was initiated and activities started to take shape. This continued into 2023 with closer collaboration with The National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR) and the NSI in Tunisia.

New partner country

At the same time, Statistics South Africa was identified as a new partner in the PAS II project. Statistics Denmark will support Statistics South Africa in starting to use administrative data sources to produce social statistics. This will result in a mission in the beginning of 2024, where a training will be supplemented by stakeholder meetings with data owners to highlight the advantages of administrative data in the production of statistics. Using administrative data sources for

statistics, allows for the production of quality statistical products, for discovering new information that can assist in developing new statistics and indicators, as well as for closing data gaps that currently prevail in the national statistical system.

Business registers

In the fall of 2023, a collaboration with the NSI in Senegal (ANSD) resulted in a mission where two experts from Statistics Denmark visited ANSD to discuss how to update, structure and manage business registers.

“It was an interesting week, where you could feel that ANSD has both skilled and dedicated employees. They were very observant in giving us a good week. ANSD has built up an administrative register, NINEA, which the other public registration authorities must be connected to. We attended a meeting with Tax and they welcomed the new register very well. The work in the next 1-2 years is to connect everyone in the register and then understand the differences between an administrative and a statistical register.”

*Steen Eiberg-Jørgensen, Deputy Head of Division,
Business Data Collection and Registers*

This led to a number of discussions about strengths and weaknesses of business registers based on the experts' experiences from Denmark and from other countries. Following the mission, ANSD will continue to work on implementing a new common, central, administrative business register and integrate it with other systems in relevant authorities. The result will be a regularly updated statistical business register with input from already existing administrative data.

Project communication

Finally, the work on a joint article on coordination challenges and opportunities was initiated by the consor-

PROJECT FACTS

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| Project name | Pan-African Statistics Programme II: Developing social statistics, economic and business statistics in African national statistical offices. |
| Key topics | Statistics within health, education, labour, national accounts, and Statistical Business Register (SBR). |
| Partner | Senegal, Tunisia, Rwanda and South Africa. More countries will be identified during the project. |
| Funding | Eurostat |
| Period | 44 months starting from 28 February 2022 |

tium. This article will allow the consortium to share lessons learned and achievements of PAS II with donors and other NSIs. A leaflet and newsletter have also been initiated, likewise creating opportunities for sharing lessons learned and for informing about the consortium's work.

What's next?

In 2024, the collaboration with Rwanda, Tunisia, Senegal, and South Africa will continue and more missions will follow to further support and exchange experiences on communication, SBR and administrative microdata.

In addition, a study visit on communication and dissemination for three countries will be hosted by Stati-

stics Denmark to display our solutions, and inspire and support African countries in their communication and dissemination efforts.

It is also planned that the support to the component on labour force surveys led by INSEE will continue and possibly result in a new collaboration with a fifth partner NSI. Finally, close coordination and collaboration with the other consortium partners and with other relevant stakeholders such as UN ECA and StatAfric will continue to be a focus to prevent duplication, to learn from each other, and to work together on strengthening the African statistical system ■



African girls in their school uniform walking on a dusty road
Photo: Colourbox

TURKISH CYPRIOT COMMUNITY

OBJECTIVE

To improve statistical actions regarding administrative data sources management and governance, and further develop statistics in the Turkish Cypriot Community.

Key achievements 2023

The start of the project was delayed to November 2022 due to the pandemic and various scheduling issues among stakeholders. It was decided to prolong the project into 2024 to be able to catch up on the initial delays.

Stretching the implementation period of the project also gives more time for the Turkish Cypriot Community (TCC) Statistical Institute to adapt the activities while building up relationships with relevant stakeholders and data providers with the goal of establishing Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs).

Business register

The main trust of the project is the establishment of a new coherent statistical business register. It is built using the generic statistical business register software STATBUS (See <https://www.statbus.org/>) in cooperation with Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument of the European Commission (TAIEX).

STATBUS will enable the TCC Statistical Institute to compile more detailed and solid information on businesses in their community to be used in the production of statistics.

Data sharing

To feed information into STATBUS data sharing agreements (MOUs) between the authorities in the TCC are necessary. Thus allowing regular data transmissions to the Statistical Institute. Getting stakeholders onboard have been challenging throughout the project, yet the steps

towards getting signed MoUs between the authorities in the TCC have resulted in the Ministry of Finance passing a letter to internal authorities addressing its support to sharing data with the TCC Statistical Institute.

SAS Training

Using technical assistance funding from the EU the Statistical Institute is modernizing its hardware and IT infrastructure. Our project supports the modernization process with hands on training in SAS and information security management. The staff has participated in several SAS trainings enabling them to apply SAS in their statistic production.

What's next?

The project will continue to mid July 2024. In 2024 the focus will be on finalizing the business register and strengthening and systemizing the data flow to the TCC Statistical Institute from relevant stakeholders. This entails further steps towards signing MoUs ■

PROJECT FACTS

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| Project name | Technical Assistance on Statistics for the Turkish Cypriot Community |
| Key topics | Business statistics, administrative data sources management and governance, communication strategy and branding, building partnerships |
| Partner | The Statistical Institute of the Turkish Cypriot Community |
| Funding | The European Union, represented by the European Commission |
| Period | November 2022 - July 2024 |



Castle ruins, Northern Cyprus
Photo: Colourbox

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