Forwarding Armenian Statistics Through Twinning
AM09/ENP-PCA/TP/04

Newsletter #2: June – October 2011

This is the second Newsletter from the EU Twinning Project, *Forwarding Armenian Statistics Through Twinning*. The EU funded project is now nine months into the implementation period, and two or three activities (missions/study visits) have taken place within each of the project's six components. This version of the Newsletter provides a brief overview of the project activities during June-October 2011.

Meetings in the Steering Committee
The Steering Committee of the project meets every three months to discuss the progress and possible problems or obstacles in the project. Formally, the Steering Committee consists of the two Project Leaders, Mr. Mnatsakanyan and Mr. Thygesen, the RTA and the RTA counterpart, and the Project Administration Office. The EU Delegation to Republic of Armenia normally has three observers present at the meetings, and also the Twinning component leaders of NSSRA normally are present. Furthermore, external stakeholders or representatives from Eurostat could be invited to the meeting – this has not yet been the case, though.

So far, three meetings in the Steering Committee have been held, the last of these by the end of September. The state of the project is generally considered to be sound. Some particular focus is put on the co-operation with the State Revenue Committee of Republic of Armenia (comp. B), and the planning and financing of the Agricultural Census (comp. D) and of the ICT usage survey (comp. F). Besides, because of its general importance for Armenia also the Population and Housing Census that was to take place in Armenia 12-21 October 2011 was discussed in some detail.

Component A. Quality Management
The focus is currently on producing so-called *quality declarations* for each of the approximately 130 products of NSSRA. Using a standard template, these quality declarations will, as metadata containing basic definitions, methodologies etc., be important tools for users of statistics in order to understand and distinguish the purposes and uses of the different statistics. It is foreseen that approximately 30 quality declarations will be produced per quarter and posted on the website of NSSRA continuously, as they become available. Another current point of focus is NSSRA's dissemination of data in even more user-friendly ways and formats. Specific dissemination tools are being considered, and the possible set-up and implementation of such a system may start in the first half of 2012.

Component B. Business Statistics
In order to measure the reduction in the response burden related to the business statistics surveys, a baseline was established by choosing representative enterprises from 7 different surveys, and asking these enterprises about the time usage connected to filling in the currently used reporting forms. Analysis of the reporting forms with respect to possible consolidation, deleting of unnecessary questions as well as purely design issues is now undertaken. It is planned to develop new forms, and to test these in the first half of 2012 including a new measurement of the matching response burden. The final versions of the revised reporting forms should be put into use by the end of 2012 and beginning of 2013. In parallel, the statistical business register of NSSRA is being developed. Both an enlarged coverage is foreseen, through a co-operation between NSSRA and the Central Bank of RA, and possible future updating possibilities are being prepared – primarily by an extended co-operation with the State Revenue Committee and through the general application of the NACE classification within the government sector of Armenia.

Component C. National Accounts – Improvement of Exhaustiveness of GDP
The first tables connected to the so-called *tabular approach* have already been filled in. These first tables create an overview from which the systematic filling in of the remainder of the tables will take off. The tabular approach creates an overview of the chosen methodologies related to the different parts of the national

accounts, and thereby also helps to ensure that all parts of the economy are included correctly in the national accounts. During the first missions within the component, time has also been devoted to revision policy and revision strategy, hereunder the national accounts' central and coordinating role with respect to closely related statistics, like those of government finances and of balance of payments.

Component D. Agricultural Census

During the Twinning project, the Agricultural Census of Armenia should be planned. The Agricultural Census is, like the Population and Housing Census, a huge task, involving in particular the regional agencies of

NSSRA from where the basic data collection will be organized. To start that process a training workshop was conducted 23-24 September in Sevan Chkalovka, where all regional agencies of NSSRA were represented (*see picture from the group work session*). The seminar benefitted from the presence of US Dept. of Agriculture with whom NSSRA and the Twinning project work together. Before this workshop, fundamental work had been carried out during two activities within the component, mainly focusing on the questionnaire to be used in the census and on getting all definitions in accordance with the European Union regulation. Also basic work connected to budgeting and organisation of the census has been started. The financing issue is not solved yet, but NSSRA / the Twinning project will together with representatives from US Dept. of Agriculture seek to raise the issue at a high-level political meeting in November 2011.

Component E. Harmonized Consumer Price Index (HICP)

The present national consumer price index has been analysed in direct comparison with the HICP, and the necessary supplementary information has been identified. Suggestions to changes in the work routines in order to make room for the necessary additional work, especially related to the collection of prices, have been discussed. First and foremost, the possibility of going from three to two monthly price collections for most of the items (commodities and services) in question is subsequently being analysed, the main criteria being that the quality of the current CPI should not suffer from this change. Furthermore, the work has concentrated on other issues, e.g. with how to adjust for changes in the quality of the observed items.

Component F. Statistics on ICT Society

Within this component, the first study visit tour was conducted to Statistics Denmark by the end of August. The time in Copenhagen was partly, as a direct continuation of the first activity within the component, spent on further discussions on the methodology and the questionnaire for the NSSRA survey on ICT usage in Armenian enterprises, and partly on broad presentations of the Danish ICT statistics system and issues related thereto, such as the business register, data collection and dissemination issues. It has been decided, after discussions at the Steering Committee meeting, to implement not only a pilot study on enterprises' ICT usage within the Twinning framework, but to do a similar study on the government and public sector. Both studies, involving development of the EU methodology on ICT statistics, will be conducted during 2012.

More information – how to get it?

General information on the project as well as reports from the project activities (missions) can be found on the websites of NSSRA, www.armstat.am/en/?nid=383, and of Statistics Denmark, www.dst.dk/armenia. You are also welcome to contact the daily administration/management directly:

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