

TWINNING CONTRACT

BA 12 IB ST 01

Support to the State and Entity Statistical Institutions, phase VI



MISSION REPORT

on

Activity 4.4 Review of data collected

Mission carried out by
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List of Abbreviations

BHAS	Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
CBBH	Central Bank of Bosnia and Herzegovina
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
FBiH	Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
FIS	Institute for Statistics of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
MS	EU Member State
RSIS	Institute for Statistics of Republika Srpska
RTA	Resident Twinning Adviser
TOR	Terms of Reference

Executive Summary

1. General comments

The main purpose of activity 4.4 was to present and review the ESSPROS pilot survey results quality, to adequately analyse the main data and metadata methodological characteristics, and to discuss on the further steps to be taken.

The expected activities were:

- Data quality checked
- Recommendations for improvement of survey based on lessons learned

The consultants would like to express their thanks to all officials and individuals met for the kind support and valuable information which he/she received during the stay in Bosnia-Herzegovina and which highly facilitated the work of the consultants.

This views and observations stated in this report are those of the consultants and do not necessarily correspond to the views of EU, BHAS, FIS, RSIS or Statistics Denmark / Croatian Bureau of Statistics.

2. Assessment and results

2.a Pilot data collection – preparation and implementation

During the June of 2015, representatives of the BHAS, FIS and RSIS have conducted ESSPROS pilot survey.

Within the ESSPROS quantitative questionnaire, they included most significant methodological guidelines, while legal basis relevant for each reporting unit was connected to the corresponding item of the questionnaire. During the previous mission, the methodological and legal basis, prepared by the BHAS, FIS and RSIS representatives, has been analysed also with the assistance of the experts, in line with available time frame.

Following the data collection, the three statistical institutions have done the primary validation of quantitative and qualitative data, after which they often had to re-contact reporting units as the accounting structure used on the field had to be adjusted to certain extent in order to fit properly within the ESSPROS methodological structure. Especially demanding situation was to be addressed by the FIS representatives, due to the cantonal territorial-administrative structure, and the fact that they needed to physically go in several cantons and provide first-hand assistance in the filling of the ESSPROS questionnaires.

Representatives of the BHAS, FIS and RSIS have, therefore, presented the experts their experiences gathered by the implementation of the pilot survey, main results, as well as the main problems detected.

From the data gathered by the pilot, it is evident that the preparation of the pilot was done very diligently, which in turn resulted in the fact that significant number of the reporting units provided quantitative and qualitative data of quality which seems to be rather comprehensive and in line with the applicable ESSPROS methodological.

Furthermore, this data collection exercises resulted in several positive aspects, on which further improvement could be built in, in the future. Namely, reporting units have become aware of the ESSPROS statistics in greater extent, the overall knowledge of the national social protection system has been improved, system of communication and focal points has been strengthen. At the same time, reporting units for which further efforts will have to be undertaken in order to optimise their data quality have been recognised.

2.b Pilot data collection - results and main remarks

Data collected by the pilot correspond to around 17.4% of the BiH GDP in current prices for the 2013 (28 189 164 000 KM).¹

Looking at this main statistical indicator, one can conclude that this time coverage has been embedded rather comprehensively. Having said that, it also indicates that in the future data collections, attempts should be made in order to methodologically establish, and, when it becomes feasible, practically implement data collection of the additional ESSPROS benefits and/or schemes.

As an example of such future activity, one could state expenditures for the sick leave paid by employer.

It is evident that such data collections will not be feasible during this project, but in case existence of additional ESSPROS coverage is identified, this information can be used in years to come.

Regarding the concrete data, MISSOC database of metadata is still the best available benchmark for qualitative data, and it has been established that the majority of collected qualitative data are in line with MISSOC.

Having said that, it certainly designates ESSPROS statistics as a main statistical tool within social protection field, in the following time period.

Nonetheless, there are issues which should be addressed prior to the next mission, in some instances by re-contacting reporting units, while other should be treated by

¹ First Release of the Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina: „Gross Domestic Product by Expenditure Approach 2014 - Preliminary data (Table 1.1); available at http://www.bhas.ba/saopstenja/2015/GDP_2015_R_001_01-bos.pdf).

harmonising the methodological treatment of the similar or identical benefits (this is to be done when aggregating data on scheme level).

For example in Unemployment scheme data could be re-checked to establish is there a potential for the additional breakdown between administrative cost and placement services and job-search assistance benefit. Furthermore, vocational training seems to be an item for which data could be fully completed.

Alternative data sources should be investigated in order to validate the quality of the data (e.g. number of beneficiaries in the schemes and the amount of benefits they receive, which could indicate if there is something missing in the totals, also external reports and analysis of the social protections system in BiH could be used).

Regarding the welfare scheme, additional efforts to get additional data and metadata are advisable. Furthermore re-contacting the reporting units should be done within this scheme, when necessary.

There are several financial inputs intended for activities for which it has to be established whether they represent active labour policy measures, or they have a prevailing social inclusion character (e.g. action plans towards Roma inclusion on the labour market).

Transfers have in major part been identified and they seem to be of proper quality. More efforts will have to be put into place in order to equalise them to the highest extent possible, both on receipts and expenditure side. It should be investigated which data source that are believed to be the most correct regarding balancing transfers between schemes. Then simply just use that data source in determining the expenditure side and the receipts side of transfers between schemes so they equalise.

For several schemes a part of the data on contributions from self-employed is either missing (Unemployment scheme) or is included in the total amount of contributions but for the time being cannot be extracted in the corresponding cell (Pension scheme).

With regard to the Pension scheme, additional checks are advisable.

As main pension insurance aggregates contribute substantially to the overall ESSPROS expenditures, it seems likely that data have been collected either in entirety or in major part. Having said that, it seems that for this scheme more emphasis will be given to the qualitative information. Several issues are still to be discussed.

Namely, there are no expenditures for the anticipated old-age pension. As the pension system allows early-retirement, under special prerequisites, further efforts are to be invested in order to identify, if any, expenditures embedded by this item.

Furthermore, there is an item referring to the co-financing of the pensions for certain categories of beneficiaries (e.g. war veterans). A future query is advisable in order to, at least theoretically, determine whether certain categories of beneficiaries could be considered to be beneficiaries under special regulations. In instances where special regulations refer to the essential element of either conditions for pension acquisition

(e.g. years in service) or for pension calculation (e.g. different valuation points), there could be a potential for separate pension schemes. In this case as well, it is not to be expected that practical implementation will be feasible within the time frame of this project, but it is advisable to collect as much of qualitative data as possible, for future usage.

Within Social protection schemes, personal disability benefit and family disability benefit will have to undergo additional methodological treatment in order to be placed in the appropriate item. But still, at this stage in the project, it is most important to have placed the social benefits in the appropriated main functions.

In general, there is still a significant number of qualitative information for which more information is needed in order to finalise their statistical treatment. It would be of high importance that aforementioned information is collected before the next mission, scheduled in February 2016.

3. Conclusions and recommendations

Looking from different perspectives (preparation of the reporting units for the data provision, linking legal and methodological infrastructure, developing the system of responsible contact points, data and metadata collection and initial analysis etc.), implementation of the second EPRROS pilot survey can be characterised as rather successful and comprehensive.

Nonetheless, there are quantitative and qualitative issues, which should be addressed prior to the next mission, in some instances by re-contacting reporting units and use of alternative data sources to investigate the quality of the data especially regarding the welfare scheme, while other should be dealt with by harmonising the methodological treatment of the similar or identical benefits (this is to be done when aggregating data on scheme level).

Actions needed for moving forward as well as for preparing the next mission –add rows as needed.

Action	Deadline	Responsible person
Carry on the attempts to re-contact the reporting units for which there are indications of incomplete data or qualitative data that lack enough detail	End of January 2016	BHAS, FIS, RSIS
Explore the existence and data availability for certain benefits/group of benefits, for the level of entire BiH	End of January 2016	BHAS, FIS, RSIS
Prepare inputs for the methodology, based primarily on the qualitative information for which no pending issues exist	End of January 2016	MS, BHAS, FIS, RSIS
Make a list of items that need to be discussed during the next mission and distribute the list to the MS and BC experts in order to prepare the discussions	End of January 2016	BHAS, FIS, RSIS

Explore the availability of alternative data sources, which could be utilised for the estimation of the comprehensiveness of the ESSPROS coverage and for possible future data quality monitoring	End January 2016	MS, BHAS, FIS, RSIS
Contact the experts in case of questions regarding quantitative and qualitative data, as well as quality validation	November 2015 - January 2016	BHAS, FIS, RSIS

Topics for the next mission

How to develop ESSPROS

Discussion on development of methodology

Further development of the inputs for the future ESSPROS methodology

Overview of the state of quality for the issues designated as “pending” during the activity 4.4

Further validation of the pilot survey results

Annex 1. Terms of Reference

<p align="center">EU Twinning Project BA-12-IB-ST-01</p> <p align="center">Terms of Reference</p> <p align="center">Component 4: ESSPROS</p> <p align="center">2-6 November 2015</p> <p align="center">Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo, Zelenih beretki 26 – Conference room, I floor</p>
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Activity

4.4 Review of data collected

Benchmarks

- Analysis of local settings conducted and links with national accounts statistics defined by 2nd project quarter
- More data for developing ESSPROS available by 5th project quarter
- ESSPROS methodology available by 8th project quarter
- Results of pilot survey available by 8th project quarter

Purpose of activity

The expected activities are:

- Review of quality of the pilot survey results
- Data processing and analysis of the pilot survey results
- Discussion on how to improve the survey

Expected output

- Data quality checked
- Recommendations for improvement of survey based on lessons learned

Annex 2. Persons met

Experts

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