



## Forwarding Armenian Statistics Through Twinning

AM09/ENP-PCA/TP/04

# MISSION REPORT

on

# BUSINESS STATISTICS

## ACTIVITY B3.2 IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT

Mission carried out by  
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## List of Abbreviations

EU	European Union
NSSRA	National Statistical Service, Republic of Armenia
RA	Republic of Armenia
SBR	Statistical Business Register
SBS	Structural Business Survey
SD	Statistics Denmark
CSB	Central Statistical bureau of Latvia

## 0. Executive Summary

Component B involves the following objectives: 1) To identify and quantify response burden; 2) to improve reporting forms for business surveys, and 3) to define and adopt a strategy for reorganising the SBR with better coverage and actuality.

This mission was the fourth activity of component B. The key objectives of this activity were:

1. To assess and support the work started during the activities B.1, B.2 and B.3.1.
2. To follow up on the baseline measurement of the response burden
3. To agree on the content of the reporting forms chosen for the measuring of the response burden as regards inclusion/exclusion of specific questions on the reporting forms
4. To begin work on a Design guide and template for restructured reporting forms
5. To decide on the content and the timing of the next activity, B.4.1
6. To make adjustments to the road map for component B.

The method used was to some extent “hands-on” through concrete assistance with respect to the choice and implementation of options, and workshop discussions based on the recommendations given in the B.2 report.

The overall conclusion is that very good working relations have been established and that agreement on the main concepts regarding the re-design of reporting form layout and content was reached. Moreover, the work on the measurement of response burden is taking place.

With regard to Reporting Forms the main conclusions were that there is clearly a possibility 1) to create more user-friendly forms through redesign; 2) to decrease the response burden through improved data collection processes, and 3) to reduce the burden in relation to SBS and related questionnaires and to build experience and create a “model” for other areas.

The next activity (B4.1) will take place in March 2012 as planned, and several follow-up actions must be performed by NSSRA in order for this activity to be fruitful.

# 1. General comments

This mission report was prepared within the Armenian-Danish Project „**Forwarding Armenian Statistics Through Twinning**”. Within the framework of this project NSSRA has decided on the reduction of reporting burden as an overall aim for component B of the project, *Business Register, Structural Business Surveys and Response Burden*. This involves several objectives:

- To identify and quantify response burden
- To improve reporting forms for business surveys
- To define and adopt a strategy for the reorganisation of the SBR with a better coverage and actuality – primarily based on data from administrative registers.

Against this background, this activity was the fourth within component B – i.e. an “implementation support” mission. The activities will contribute to the above-mentioned objectives and to the benchmark for this activity set out in the contract: development of reporting form(s) in relation to business surveys.

The concrete objectives / expected output of this mission, cf. annex 1, were:

- Assessment and support of the on-going work;
- Evaluation of the baseline measurement of the response burden;
- Agreement as to the content of the reporting forms chosen for the measuring of the response burden as regards inclusion/exclusion of specific questions on the reporting forms;
- Creation of a design guide and template for restructured reporting forms;
- Decision on the content and the timing of the next activity, B.4.1;
- Adjustments of the road map for component B.

The consultants would like to express their sincere thanks to all officials and individuals met for their hospitality and for the kind and active support as well as the valuable information which they received during their stay in Armenia. This has highly facilitated the work of the consultants.

The views and observations stated in this report are those of the consultants and do not necessarily correspond to the views of EU, NSSRA, CSB or SD.

# 2. Assessment and results

The observations in this report are based on interviews and discussion with managers and staff at NSSRA during the meetings and workshops held during the mission. Good progress has been achieved since mission B.2 – all tasks regarding the response burden and reporting forms were completed by the NSSRA and provided to consultants. In order to be able to ensure smooth implementation of the planned activities and results of the whole component B, some further work has to be done by the NSSRA before the next mission B.4.

All in all, the consultants find that NSSRA and the staff participating to this activity clearly showed a positive and constructive interest and commitment in this component as well as

- awareness of the need for making NSSRA’s reporting forms more user-friendly, and
- awareness of the need measure and reduce the response burden, and the benefits of evaluating whether variables are still necessary and/or up to date.

Mr. Gagik Ananyan, was out of office this week and therefore Ms. Lilit Petrosyan was acting as BC component leader.

The work plan of this component was verified and detailed. Some adjustments were made to it in the beginning of the mission B.3.2.

An overview of the current status and progress achieved since the last activity regarding the response burden measurement, design issues, tasks of the NSSRA necessary to be done before mission B.3.2 was given by the Ms. Lilit Petrosyan.

The road map on activities concerning restructuring reporting forms for business statistics was adjusted, discussed and confirmed.

## **2.1. Reporting forms**

### ***Meeting with the Methodological unit on current design procedures***

A meeting was held with Ms. Lilit Petrosyan and members of the Methodological unit, in order to document the current procedures for design and implementation of NSSRA surveys. A summary of the topics discussed and the answers given can be found in Annex 6 of the report.

From the summary of the current design process, it is possible to identify the following areas which can influence the redesign process:

- the cover page of the NSSRA questionnaires is a standard design which has been approved by the State Statistical Council . This should be taken into consideration in relation to any changes which may be recommended in connection with redesigning the questionnaire template (see Appendix 10 and 11). Any changes to the cover page design will need to be approved by the State Statistical Council.
- Any permanent changes to questionnaires will need to be approved by the Ministry of Justice. However, it should be possible to test a prototype of a new design on a test group (optional participation) without first obtaining approval from the Ministry.

### ***Workshop regarding optimization of reporting forms***

A workshop on areas to be improved, which were found during the previous mission B.2 and after the analysis of comments received from the NSSRA on Annexes 6 and 7 of the mission report B.2, was held. The main aim of the workshop was:

- To summarize all work that had been done during the previous mission B.2 and after it,
- To discuss the agreement points still open.

The workshop was held for the employees of Business Statistics Department, Finance Statistics Division and Statistical Work Methodology and Classifications Division. The Power Point presentation is included in the Annex 8 of this report.

As agreed in mission B.2, five business statistics forms were analyzed (annual survey 1-TG on Economic activity, annual survey 11-HM on Fixed assets, monthly survey 1-KS on Construction, monthly survey 1-Trade on Trade, and monthly survey 1-Production on Industrial production). The NSSRA have done a great job after the mission B.2, describing the survey strategies of mentioned questionnaires and giving suggestions regarding the areas to be improved.

A lot of suggested improvement areas were supported by the subject matter divisions. However, there were some suggestions still under consideration. These suggestions were discussed during the workshop, and a very positive result was achieved. NSSRA approved almost all of the suggestions left for further consideration and also agreed to exclude a number of questions from the reporting forms. There were also several proposals that were not directly supported, but a positive indication was given that in the further reporting form improvement process those suggestions could be taken into consideration.

The main topics of discussion were:

- the necessity to include the variable “Number of employees” in a number of business statistics questionnaires. It was agreed that this variable is available in other sources and can be excluded from the annual reporting forms. However, in short-term business surveys such a variable should be retained, because there are no other exhaustive data sources for this variable. The variable is important as it is used for size-class breakdowns in publications of short-term statistics,
- the necessity for the variable “financial leasing”. This variable has been deleted from the requirements of the EU regulation No.295/2008 concerning structural business statistics, and also data on financial leasing to the NSSRA have been provided by the Central Bank of Armenia,
- the inclusion of the variable “operational leasing” in the survey on fixed assets. In compliance with the definition “operational leasing” should not be included in the fixed assets and is counted as Gross investment in tangible goods,
- the fact that questions on situation at the beginning of the year have been asked and at the same time the monthly/quarterly information has been required. It was explained that it is due to the revisions of previous periods and data quality control. The experts suggested to measure the amount of usual revisions and to analyze the impact on output. Also, additional work within the NSSRA should be done on the data quality check and corrections,
- contradictory variables – with similar meaning but different names. For example, in the survey on economic activity 1-TG – two very similar variables are required - on income from trade (lines 01.1 and 45.7) and on expenses for purchase of the goods for resale (lines 01.1.1 and 10). The results obtained for those lines are different, leading to doubts regarding the data quality. The experts suggest to exclude such contradictory variables and to pay more attention to explanations and data quality checks.

### ***Presentation of Principles of design and test of reporting forms for Methodological and Subject Matter Divisions***

A workshop on principles of design and test of reporting forms was held. The main aim of the workshop was:

- To present best practice in the design of user-friendly forms
- To give examples of how these principles have been used in the redesign of SD forms

The workshop was held for all interested employees of NSSRA. The Power Point presentation is included in the Annex 9 of this report.

Some of the main points of the presentation were:

- Good relationship with the users results in good data for NSSRA
- Only ask for information that you will use (Question Protocol)
- Make questions easy to understand
- Clarify meaning by grouping

- Shorten instructions and rewrite in plain language
- Cut instructions that are not needed
- Include NSSRA contact information
- Include a thank you at end of form
- Make sure labels are closely associated with the fields
- Choose legible text – font and words
- Use white space to make easy-to-read paragraphs
- Make the form look organised by grouping

In addition, a “Question protocol” was introduced as a tool which can be used in analysing questionnaires. An example of the protocol can be seen in Annex 6 of this report. NSSRA were positive to the use of the question protocol and the best practice for design suggested in the workshop.

### ***Workshop with Methodology Division regarding implementation of design principles for Form on Industrial production 1-Production***

A draft of a new form was made, applying the principles of form design which had been presented in the morning workshop. Some of the changes that were applied were:

- Title of form and reporting period moved to top of form
- Legal paragraphs and other texts were removed from the first page. These texts could be placed in the notification letter and a reference could be made to the website
- Contact information for NSSRA included in footer
- Font size was increased for easier readability
- Number of columns reduced and codes for staff moved to right side and greyed out
- Labels and fields are clearly defined and connected
- Units (persons, thousand drams) are clearly marked
- Comments field included
- Thank you at end of form

The content of questionnaire was also revised taking into account the agreements on the optimization of reporting forms reached during the workshop. The following fields were taken out from the questionnaire:

- a number of fields that referred to the situation during previous periods
- variables that can be calculated within the Statistical Office.

Taking into account the fields related to the content, a following conclusion can be drawn: suggestions taken into account will reduce the number of fields in the questionnaire by about 33%.

This draft was an exercise in how an existing form could be simplified and made more user-friendly. Any changes will still need to be tested and approved before the form can be implemented. Examples of the existing and redesigned forms can be seen in Annexes 10 and 11.

### ***Discussion of possible design changes for Fixed Assets (11-HM)***

The redesign of the questionnaire on fixed assets 11-HM was considered. The experts consider it to be one of the most complicated questionnaires within the business statistics surveys.



In discussions on the optimization of reporting forms during the workshop it was agreed that at least 10 fields will be deleted from the reporting form. This will reduce the number of fields in the questionnaire by about 3%.

At this stage, it was not possible to make a full redesign of this questionnaire because additional work from the NSSRA has to be done. It was proposed to make a detailed analysis of the necessity for all questions included in the questionnaire – to analyze the outputs they are used for and find out if every question included in the questionnaire has particular user. It was suggested to use the prototype of the “Question protocol” in the analysis of this questionnaire (See Annex 6).

It was also suggested that the NSSRA should analyze Statistics Denmark’s questionnaire on Account Statistics (similar relevant lines 1b, 16, 24, 30-43, 67-87) and determine if there is a possibility to implement this type of layout on the Fixed Assets form (see Annex 11). If possible, the revised content should be available before the next mission B4.1.

The MS Experts mentioned a necessity to harmonize the organization of the questionnaire on fixed assets (the questionnaire has been broken down by different sections). The MS Experts believe that such harmonization would increase the efficiency of the data production and will decrease the burden on the NSSRA. This suggestion was not fully accepted by the NSSRA as it was not directly related to the response burden.

#### ***Visit to Yerevan regional office***

A visit to the Yerevan regional agency was conducted and a meeting was held with Mr. Vrezh Avetisyan, head of the Yerevan office. A discussion about the practical data collection was held. Organisational issues regarding data collection and the main problems were examined.

It was concluded that, with the current reporting forms, the burden on respondents as well as on the NSSRA is too high. Also, a problem concerning the “lost” enterprises (those, which cannot be found) was highlighted. Strong support for the use of administrative data was given.

## **2.2. Response burden**

The results of the response burden surveys have been collected and tabulated by NSSRA (See Annex 7). An analysis of this data will be made by Statistics Denmark and the results will be made available to NSSRA before the next activity, B4.1.

# **3. Conclusions and recommendations**

## **3.1 Summary conclusions**

### **Reporting forms**

Generally, good progress during the mission B.3.2 was achieved.

The necessity to measure and reduce the response burden was strongly supported. In this part of component B it was suggested that a decrease in the response burden can be obtained through redesigning the reporting forms (both content and layout).

In relation to the content of the reporting forms, the following improvement areas were supported by the subject matter divisions of the NSSRA:

- questions about situation in previous periods will be deleted (in questionnaires 1-Production, 1-Trade and 1-KS),
- variables that can be calculated within the Statistical Office will be deleted (in questionnaire 1-Production),
- variable «Revenue» and «Number of persons employed» will be deleted and acquired from other source (in questionnaire 11-HM),
- variables «financial leasing» and «operational leasing» will be deleted (in questionnaire 11-HM).

There were also few suggestions not directly supported by NSSRA, but where a positive indication was given that in some further steps of the reporting form improvement those suggestions could be taken into consideration:

- questions about situation from the beginning of the year will not be removed from the questionnaires 1-Production and 1-Trade,
- variable «Number of persons employed» in questionnaires 1-Production and 1-Trade will not be deleted and acquired from other source,
- variable «Amortization of fixed assets and intangible assets» in questionnaires 1-TG will not be deleted and obtained from other source.

Counting only suggested improvement in areas supported by the NSSRA, and the following reduction in the number of fields in questionnaires will be achieved:

- 1-Production 33%,
- 1-Trade 33%,
- 1-KS 41 %,
- 11-HM 3%.

In relation to the design changes to the forms, a good result was achieved during the workshop. The example of the redesigned form for Industrial production can be seen as a prototype for further redesign of NSSRA questionnaires. However, the design changes need to be reviewed and approved by the NSSRA. The experts also recommend that the form be tested by a group of respondents before it is sent to external approval and test. The effect of the entire response burden reduction will be calculated at a later point in Component B.

## **Response burden**

As mentioned above, the results of the response burden survey conducted by NSSRA will be analysed in the beginning of 2012. The results of this analysis will be made available to NSSRA by the MS Experts along with recommendations for the future steps to be taken.

## **3.2 Recommendations**

### **Reporting forms**

NSSRA should adjust their reporting forms according to the agreements on content reached during the mission B.3.2 (the following questionnaires should be reviewed: 1-Production, 1-Trade, 1-KS and 11-HM).

NSSRA should continue working on analysis of variables included in the business statistics questionnaires:

- to review if all variables are up-to-date and how the data is being used and by whom,
- to analyse if variables can be obtained from other statistical surveys or statistical/administrative sources. If variables exist, to search for possibilities to use them (compare coverage or search for estimation procedures),
- to analyze the possibility of excluding cumulative values in connection with monthly/quarterly reporting. The impact of usual revisions could be measured and additional analysis within NSSRA be undertaken of the consequences for data quality check and error correction procedures when/if possibly excluding the cumulative values from the monthly/quarterly reporting forms in question,
- to review contradictory variables - with similar meaning but different naming (within one or between different statistical surveys).

To pay particular attention to the questionnaire on fixed assets (11-HM) - to make detailed analysis of the necessity for all questions included in the questionnaire by using the “Question protocol”, cf. Annex 6 (prototype of SD example).

In relation to the design process, it would be beneficial if a draft of a new design was made for each of these forms (1-Trade, 1-KS and 11-TG), after the review of variables is completed. The design should be based on the best practice described in the workshop on principles of design and test of reporting forms, as well as on the example draft of the new design for the industrial production (1-Production) questionnaire.

## **4. Actions before next activity (B4.1)**

### **Reporting forms**

1. Monthly survey on industrial production (1-Production) redesigned during the mission B.3.2 should be reviewed and approved by NSSRA. Drafts of a new design for the other questionnaires which have been reviewed (1-Trade, 1-KS and 1-TG), could also be attempted.
2. “Question protocol” should be completed for the questionnaire on fixed assets (11-HM).
3. Comparative analysis of the NSSRA and SD questionnaire on fixed assets should be completed and feedback collected. If time permits, a draft of a new questionnaire would be a beneficial input to the next mission.

### **Response Burden**

Analysis of the collected data from the tables should be completed by the MS Experts and delivered to NSSRA.

### **Roadmap and plan for next activity**

See Annex 4.

## Annex 1. Terms of Reference

### Terms of Reference (B3.2); 5–9 December 2011

Component A	Quality Management
<b>Component B</b>	<b><i>Business Register, Structural Business Survey, and Respondent Burden</i></b>
Component C	Improvement of the Exhaustiveness of GDP
Component D	Agricultural Census
Component E	Harmonized Consumer Price Index
Component F	ICT Society

### **Activity B3.2**    ***Implementation support***

#### **1. Purpose of activity**

The purpose of this activity is to follow up on the work started during the activities B.2 and B.3.1. The method will to some extent be “hands-on” through concrete assistance with respect to the choice and implementation of options, and the workshop discussions will be based on the recommendations given in the B.2 report.

#### **2. Expected output of the activity**

The expected outputs of the activity are:

- The on-going work assessed and supported;
- Evaluation of the baseline measurement of the response burden;
- Agreement of the content of the reporting forms chosen for the measuring of the response burden as regards inclusion/exclusion of specific questions on the reporting forms;
- Design guide and template for restructured reporting forms;
- Decision on the content and the timing of the next activity, B.4.1;
- Adjustments of the road map for component B.

#### **3. Project Participants**

Mr. Gagik Ananyan, Member of State Council of Statistics (*BC Component Leader*)

Mr. Ashot Ananyan, Head of Industry Statistics Division;

Mr. Georgy Torosyan, Head of Transport and Communication Statistics Division;

Ms. Mariam Petrosyan, Head of Construction Statistics Division;

Ms. Anahit Harutyunyan, Head of Trade and Other Services Statistics Division.

Ms. Elina Markaine, Senior Officer, Central Bureau of Statistics of Latvia

Ms. Ashu Conrad, Senior Advisor, Statistics Denmark

*Other NSSRA staff members taking part in the activity*

Mr. Stepan Mnatsakanyan, President of NSSRA

Ms. Anahit Safyan, Head of International Statistics Cooperation Division

Ms. Lilit Petrosyan, Head of Methodological Division

Ms. Haykush Titizyan, Head of Finance Statistics Division

Mr. Laert Harutyunyan, Business Register Division

Mr. Garik Khachatzyan, Business Register Division

## Annex 2. Programme for the mission

### 4. Meeting Programme for MS Experts: 5-9 December 2011

Time	Place	Event	Purpose / detail
Monday, Dec. 5 <sup>th</sup> Morning	Congress Hotel	Meeting with RTA	To discuss the programme of the week
Afternoon	NSSRA	Meeting with BC Component Leader and Experts	Current status. Developments since last activity and follow up on the reports: 1. Response burden measurement 2. Design issues 3. Answers to annex 6 and 7 of report B.2 4. New time schedule for component B 5. Other relevant developments
Tuesday, Dec. 6 <sup>th</sup> Morning (two parallel work-shops)	NSSRA	Methodology Division	Description of the current NSSRA procedures for design and production of reporting forms (Ashu Conrad)
Afternoon (two parallel work-shops)	NSSRA	Subject matter divisions  Methodology Division	Optimization of reporting forms based on the responses to Annexes 6 and 7 of report B.2 and possibilities for internal exchange of data (Elina Markaine)
Wednesday, Dec. 7 <sup>th</sup> Morning	NSSRA	Meeting with Subject matter Methodology Divisions	Presentation - Principles for design and test of reporting forms (Ashu Conrad)
Afternoon	NSSRA	Meeting with Subject matter Methodology Divisions	Application of design principles on survey on examples from the 1-TG and 11-HM surveys
Thursday, Dec. 8 <sup>th</sup> Morning	NSSRA	Meeting with BC Component Leader	Response burden measurement status from NSSRA. Plan for activities to should take place before and during the next mission. Preliminary debriefing and agreement upon content of activity report.
Afternoon	NSSRA	Ad-hoc meetings	Reviewing and updating the road map for component B
Friday, Dec. 9 <sup>th</sup> Morning	NSSRA	Ad-hoc meetings	Drafting of report and preparation of presentation on conclusions, recommendations and actions to be taken before next mission.
Afternoon	NSSRA	Debriefing with BC Project Leader	Conclusions, decisions and recommendations. Consequences for the next mission and implied work programme for BC Experts

## **Annex 3. Persons met**

Mr. Stepan Mnatsakanyan, President of NSSRA  
Ms. Lilit Petrosyan, Head of Methodological Division  
Mr. Ashot Ananyan, Head of Industry Statistics Division  
Ms. Anahit Safyan, Head of International Statistics Cooperation Division  
Mr. Vrezh Avetisyan, Head of Yerevan Regional Agency

Julieta Mirzoyan, Chief Advisor to the president of NSSRA  
Anzhela Dashyan, Statistical Work Methodology and Classification division  
Karine Sargsyan, Statistical Work Methodology and Classification division  
Ashot Ananyan, Industry Statistics division head  
Georgi Torosyan, Transport and Communication Statistics division head  
Lusya Khachatryan, Macroeconomic Indicators and National Accounts division head  
Layert Harutyunyan, Business Register division head  
Garik Khachatryan, Business Register division head  
Lusine Kalantaryn, Labour Statistics division head  
Diana Martirosova, Household Surveys division head  
Nadezhda Astvatsaturova, Macroeconomic Indicators and National Accounts division  
Inga Baroyan, Trade and other Services Statistics division  
Susan Hunanyan, Labour Statistics division  
Lusine Markosyan, Household Surveys division  
Haykush Titizyan, Finance Statistics division  
Hasmik Matinyan, Finance Statistics division  
Lusine Paronyan, Construction Statistics division  
Kristine Malakyan, International Statistical Cooperation division  
Ruzanna Shaboyan, International Statistical Cooperation division  
Ruzanna Petrosyan, Data Base Development and Programming division  
Anahit Nazaryan, Social Statistics division  
Laura Beybutyan, Balance of Payments and Foreign Trade Statistics division  
Aram Martirosyan, Balance of Payments and Foreign Trade Statistics division  
Zaruhi Yeprikyan, Balance of Payments and Foreign Trade Statistics division  
Susanna Azatyan, Population Census and Demography division  
Armine Avetisyan, Population Census and Demography division

## Annex 4. Roadmap – Response Burden and Reporting Forms

M06 2011	M07 2011	M08 2011	M09 2011	M10 2011	M11 2011	M12 2011	M01 2012	M02 2012	M03 2012	M04 2012	M05 2012	M06 2012	M07 2012	M08 2012	M09 2012	M10 2012	M11 2012	M12 2012	
1. Measurement of resp. burden																			
2. Measurement resp. burden 2 more surveys																			
3. Templates on rep.forms filled in																			
4. Suggestions on optimisation of rep. forms analyzed																			
5. Redesign of reporting forms																			
										6. Testing and adjustment of reporting forms									
												7. Pilot test and evaluation of response burden							

1. Measurement of the response burden:
  - 6 surveys/reporting forms for baseline measurement of the response burden related to business statistics were chosen (1-KS, 1-Transport (monthly), 1-Transport (annual), 1-Trade, 1-Production and 24-Energy),
  - Questionnaires on response burden have been prepared and sent out to a total of 100 enterprises.
2. Measurement of the response burden for 2 additional surveys:
  - Baseline measurement for the response burden should be expanded for two more questionnaires, which are related to structural business statistics, on Economic activity (1-TG) and on Fixed assets (11-HM).
3. Templates describing questionnaires filled in:
  - The template, which asks to describe the purpose and survey strategy was prepared during the activity B.2,
  - The template, see Annex 6, should be filled in by survey manager of following reporting forms; 1-TG, 11-HM (separately for each of responsible section), 1-KS, 1-Trade and 1-Production,
  - The template was filled in and sent to MS Experts in the beginning of October 2011.
4. Suggestions for optimization of reporting forms analyzed:

- Several business statistics surveys were analysed and suggestions for improvements were made during the activity B.2,
- The suggestions made were summarized, see Annex 7, and responsible survey managers are asked to give their comments on them,
- Improvement areas for following reporting forms were found; 1-TG, 11-HM, 1-Trade, 1-Production, 1-KS,
- The template was filled in and sent to consultants in the beginning of October 2011.

#### 5. Re-design of questionnaire/s

- Taking into account results from points 3 and 4 redesign of reporting forms was started during the mission B.3.2,
- Redesign of Monthly survey on industrial production (1-Production) reviewed and approved by NSSRA
- Reporting form on Fixed assets should be analyzed by NSSRA to understand the necessity for all questions included in the questionnaire and to make comparative analysis of the NSSRA and SD questionnaire on fixed assets,
- Other reporting forms for business statistics (1-TG, 1-Trade, 1-KS) should be analyzed and the redesign process can be initiated by NSSRA according recommendations and approaches given during mission B.3.2.

#### 6. Testing and adjustment of reporting forms

- Redesigned reporting forms for 1-Production and 11-HM should be completed and approved by NSSRA,
- Testing of the redesigned forms (11-HM, 1-Production) should be carried out and adjustments to the forms should be made if necessary.
- Testplan for the remaining three forms (1-TG, 1-Trade, 1-KS) should be made.

#### 7. Pilot test and evaluation of the response burden

- Pilot test of re-designed reporting forms together with evaluation of the response burden,
- Comparison of the response burden before and after the re-design of reporting forms.



## **Annex 5. NSSRA Questionnaire production process**

This description is based on an interview with Ms. Lilit Petrosyan and the members of the Methodological unit.

### **Questionnaire layout**

The layout of the questionnaires is confirmed by the State Statistical Council resolution of 2001. NSSRA works according to this resolution for both general questionnaires and statistical forms. The editing of the form is done in Word by the Methodological unit.

### **Processing of questions**

The division/unit who is responsible for the survey submits a draft of the questions and instructions to the Methodological unit who then test that the form corresponds to international standards, local legislation and basic statistical concepts. The content is also discussed with the financial unit in regard to the macroeconomic indicators. After the Methodological unit has reviewed the questionnaire, it is returned to the responsible unit.

### **Approval of the questionnaire**

The questionnaire is approved by the State Council on Statistics of RA. Within seven days the approved questionnaire, according to the law of RA on “Legal Acts”, is presented as a legal act to the Ministry of Justice of RA for examination and state registration. The registered questionnaire is published by the Ministry of Justice of RA in the handbook, Normative Legal Acts of RA.

### **Instructions**

Instructions are evaluated according to the classification, the methodological documents. They are also evaluated by the legal staff of the National Legislation. The subject matter divisions are responsible for the contents.

### **Publication**

When the questionnaire has been approved, it is published in the Manual of Legal Acts. The questionnaire is a Word file, black and white, in A4 format. Printing of the questionnaires takes place externally. A version is also made available on the internet and a reference is given to the publication in the Manual of Legal Acts.

### **Changes to existing forms**

The same procedure is used in connection with changes to existing forms. A notification is sent to the respondents informing them of the change.

### **Optional forms**

Optional forms, such as the response burden form do not need approval. This could also be true for a draft version of a form where there is optional participation.

### **Pilot tests**

Social surveys are pilot tested without respondent feedback. The form is also sent to stakeholders from the different state organizations to get feedback from them.

### **Dissemination**

A letter of notification is sent out to new respondents, informing them of the survey and requesting them to submit the form within before the deadline. The notification also mentions that it is “free of charge”, that is, the enterprise does not need to pay for participating in the survey, (although they must pay the postage, if the form is sent by mail). For monthly surveys, the respondent is instructed to make a photocopy of the original questionnaire for each submission, that is, they only receive the form once, together with the notification. It is also possible to download the questionnaire from the internet.

### **Data collection**

The completed form is often delivered by hand to the NSSRA, as this process is considered to be quicker. It is also possible to sign an agreement with NSSRA, which permits the enterprise to submit the questionnaire via e-mail. It is possible to enter data directly into the Word file and attach this file to an e-mail. Ca. 102 enterprises use this agreement. Certain surveys are collected by enumerators, for example agricultural, household, price index as well as single-occurrence surveys.

### **Data entry**

The data is entered manually into the system. Until recently there was a law which said that the forms should be kept up to 75 years (25 years for legal units). World Bank recommended that this time limit should be removed, so that forms can now be destroyed after data entry.

### **Reminder procedures**

Reminders are sent out via the postal system. Telephone reminders are also used. E-mail reminders are also used. If an extension is given, the figures are reported via telephone and then the form must be submitted within 5 days.

### **Role of Regional Offices**

Most of the data collection and dissemination is done from the regional offices. They send the standard notification form one month before the form is sent out. The notification contains a list of the surveys to be reported to, a request for participation, and the respondent’s rights. The Regional offices are also responsible for sending out reminders.

## Annex 6. Question Protocol

## Question protocol

**Questionnaire name**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

[illegible]

