

TWINNING CONTRACT

JO/13/ENP/ST/23

Strengthening the capabilities of the Department of Statistics in Jordan



MISSION REPORT

on

Activity 3.2: Quality Assurance – I

Mission carried out by

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List of Abbreviations

CoP	European Statistics Code of Practice
DoS	Department of Statistics of Jordan
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MS	Member State
RTA	Resident Twinning Advisor
SD	Statistics Denmark
ToR	Terms of Reference

1. General comments

This was the second activity in component 3 and the actions planned for this activity were carried out as scheduled. The consultants would like to express their sincere thanks to all officials and individuals met for the kind support and valuable information which we received during the stay in Jordan and which highly facilitated our work. The views and observations stated in this report are those of the consultants and do not necessarily correspond to the views of EU, DoS or SD.

2. Assessment and results

The overarching purpose was to conduct a seminar for managers in DoS on the European Statistics Code of Practice (CoP), cf. the ToR (see annex 1). This purpose was accomplished via four separate workshops with different audiences – one workshop for each of the three groups of principles in the CoP plus a workshop with representatives from DoS' top management about the importance of quality management, cf. the programme (see annex 2).

The workshops had DoS' own 'Self Assessment' against the CoP (including observations made during activity 3.1) as point of departure and focused on selected indicators under each principle, where DoS has identified room for improvement. Observations and reflections from these workshops will – as applicable – feed into DoS' participation in the upcoming seminar in Rome, Italy, about CoP compliance in Mediterranean and Middle Eastern countries.

2.1. Workshop about 'Institutional Environment' (principle 1-6)

The workshop discussion was attended by 23 middle and upper level managers from DoS. The main observations were:

- With regard to programming (principle 1, indicator 5) it is not fully clear to the consultants whether DoS has a 'Statistical Programme' (in the sense of an exhaustive document comprising 1) a description of the most important initiatives and objectives for a given year and 2) the portfolio of statistical products with summary descriptions of each statistic) available to the public.
- With regard to misuse (principle 1, indicator 7) there had been one instance in 1995 about misuse of statistical figures on GDP. It had led to investigation by IFM/World Bank and subsequently to a further strengthening of DoS' independence.
- With regard to access to administrative data (principle 2, indicator 2) there are instances where DoS either cannot access data or can only access tabular data. Examples of the two cases are: access to complete data takes place in the cooperation with Custom Department; and using tabular in the case of environmental statistics.
- With regard to the legal basis for compelling response (principle 2, indicator 3) DoS in principle has this possibility, but it is not used in practice. However, generally response rates are satisfactory.
- With regard to (principle 4, indicator 1) a 'quality policy' document should be adopted and it should preferably include a brief 'quality commitment statement' vis-à-vis external users with a view to strengthen trust in DoS and the statistical output.

- With regard to pre-announcement of publication (principle 6, indicator 5 and principle 13, indicator 2) it is noted that statistics are not released at one fixed point in time during the day. It is suggested to look into the practical possibilities of doing that.

2.2. Workshop about ‘Statistical processes’ (principle 7-10)

The workshop discussion was attended by the Quality Division and the Quality Team. The main observations were:

- With regard to cooperation with the scientific community (principle 7, indicator 7) it was suggested to consider opportunities in relation to DoS’ general strategy and initiatives for improving involvement of external stakeholders.
- With regard to revisions (principle 8, indicator 6) it was agreed that the experts would provide DoS with information about Statistics Denmark’s recently developed guidelines for managing revisions in a coherent way and for communicating revisions to the users.
- Finally, it was noted that some of the areas were beyond the scope and influence of the twinning project, for instance regarding the business register situation in Jordan, response burden issues and the cooperation and utilisation of administrative data sources (cf. e.g. principle 8, indicators 1, 7 and 9).

2.3. Workshop about ‘Statistical output’ (principle 11-15)

The workshop discussion was attended by a large group of important users – from ministries, other public authorities, universities, interest groups etc. – of a wide range of statistical domains (Annex 3). From DoS the Quality Division and the Quality Team attended and an opening statement was made by the acting Director General, who underlined the will of DoS to strengthen quality, including the accessibility of statistics to the users. The main observations were:

- With regard to involvement of users (principle 11, indicator 1) the external participants clearly appreciated the initiative and would welcome initiatives from DoS for more involvement and dialogue – on a regular basis as well as ad-hoc for larger statistical projects. DoS replied that they emphasise good relations with user, and that they also would like to pursue a stronger role for the users, e.g. with regular meetings.
- With regard to user satisfaction measurements (principle 11, indicator 3) this is apparently already done – unfortunately with a very low response rate. DoS will deliver an example of the current reporting to the consultants.
- With regard to timeliness (principle 13, indicator 1) users acknowledged improvements, but would welcome further efforts to improve timeliness. (It should be noted that generally the timeliness of Jordanian statistics is comparable to other countries.)
- With regard to early release of preliminary figures (principle 13, indicator 5) there may be unexplored possibilities that could be looked into by DoS.
- With regard to accessibility of data and metadata (principle 15, indicator 1 and 5) users expressed a need for better accessibility and clarity of e.g. definitions of concepts, where users currently consult various websites (incl. the Central Bank) in order to find what they are looking. This issue underlines the need for contemporary quality declarations, which is also within the scope of the twinning project.

2.4. Workshop about the ‘Importance of quality management’

The high-level workshop discussion was attended by the Quality Division, the Quality Team and a large number of senior and middle managers – a total of 20 participants from DoS. This discussion was based on a summary made by the consultants of the observations from the three above-mentioned workshops. The main conclusions are reflected in the ‘conclusions and recommendations’, cf. section 3 below, but the main issues in the discussion were:

- The need and usefulness of developing a ‘quality policy’ for DoS. In relation to this it was argued that many users often know too little about the statistical products and methodologies in order to provide DoS with useful input and feedback. Against that background it was discussed how to segment users in order to involve actively the ‘right’ users. Also, previous ideas in DoS for creation of ‘steering committees’ and ‘technical committees’ was explained.
- It was the general impression that quite a number of improvements to the accessibility of concepts etc. – i.e. information that together with other information would go into the quality declarations – on DoS website had taken place. A lot of information is already there, but it should be easier to find it, and it should be further supplemented and structured.
- With regard to timeliness the perceptions differed. It was argued that DoS’ timeliness in general is comparable to other NSIs, although it was also acknowledged that users will always want more timely figures. However, the main point was that DoS could strengthen its communication to users about why the statistics production inevitably takes time in order to better adjust the users expectations.
- The understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the central Quality Division and the survey directorates/divisions, cf. above, was confirmed. DoS’ project management system was briefly explained.
- With regard to coordination and integration of the Jordanian statistical system, the key role and legal status of DoS and the use of memoranda of understandings (MoU) was discussed.

3. Conclusions and recommendations

The consultants’ conclusions and recommendations fall in two groups - relations with users and organisational issues.

3.1. Relations with users

- A quality policy should be developed. This document would extract and distill generally applicable points from all existing quality guidelines of statistical domains, and would also take into account the principles of the Statistics Code of Practice.
- A brief, public quality commitment statement on the web site would be important for users’ trust. This statement should be limited to a few pages of text and should be able to reassure all kinds of users that DoS adheres to sound quality principles, thus enhancing trust.
- A draft plan for regular involvement of users should be developed so that it could be presented and discussed in activity 3.4 (May 2014). The plan could include permanent user

committees and more comprehensive ad hoc arrangements, like those that DoS already organizes.

- Meetings should be organized in 2014 with segments of users. DoS has already defined segments of users and should revisit them in order to see if they are well suited for this purpose. The agenda for these meeting should be:
 - Listen to users' needs
 - Discuss strategy and plans for DoS

In order to inspire this work, Statistics Denmark promised to send information on the structure used in Denmark, including "model" mandates and examples of agendas.

3.2. Organisational issues

- Before activity 3.3. (April 2014) the following should be developed:
 - draft quality checklist templates to be used as a basis across all domains (internal use) for the various parts of the statistics production process. These checklists could build upon the checklists that are already being employed in specific statistical domains. The checklists should ensure that each and every statistical domain live up to general standards of DoS.
 - draft templates for quality declarations. These quality declarations aim to give users a good knowledge of coverage, frequency, quality (including uncertainty and limitations to use), sources and methodology. They should eventually be developed and published for all statistics. The template should reflect EU standards for quality declarations.
 - a selection of quality indicators (e.g. non-response rate, standard error) that should be included in quality declarations
- Before activity 3.4 (May 2014) the following should be developed:
 - the above-mentioned quality checklists, templates for quality declarations, and quality indicators should be tested on one pilot statistic. This way, the usefulness and problems of the measures could be illuminated and the decision on their adoption would become informed.
- Roles and responsibilities of the Quality Division, the Quality Team and the survey divisions should be agreed. As agreed in activity 3.1, the central quality division should be responsible for *provision of quality management tools*, procedures, training, support and *coordination*, and the survey divisions should be responsible for the *application of these tools* and procedures and responsible for the quality of 'their' data and metadata. This implies that the central quality division primarily has a *supporting* role and not a *controlling* role – i.e. that the responsibility for the quality of data, metadata and continuity of business remains with the organizational hierarchy. However,
 - The Quality Division should also follow up and report to the management regarding the adherence to guidelines
- A program for Quality assurance/ quality management training should be drafted and approved. This program should build on the quality training program that is already developed and should aim at giving all staff sufficient knowledge of quality management to fulfil their responsibilities in a satisfactory way.

Annex 1. Terms of Reference**Terms of Reference****EU Twinning Project JO/13/ENP/ST/23****24-27 February 2014****Component 3: Quality and metadata****Activity 3.2: Quality Assurance – I****0. Mandatory results and benchmarks for the component**

- Statistics published by DoS are quality assured and documentation is improved (Apr 2015)
- Assessment report on current situation (Jan 2014)
- The consequences of applying the European Statistics Code of Practice in DoS are discussed (Apr 2014)
- Develop a standard format for a quality declaration (Jul 2014)
- A quality declaration for the national accounts is completed and published on the DoS website (Jan 2015)
- Develop a metadata strategy (Jan 2015)
- Design and test a quality audit (Apr 2016)

1. Purpose of the activity

- To conduct a seminar for the managers and lower level managers on the European Statistics Code of Practice in relation to the ‘processes’
- Discussion on how the principles can apply to DoS and how it will change the way DoS works (internal processes)
- To conduct a seminar for the key external users of ‘DoS’ statistics on the European Statistics Code of Practice in relation to the ‘outputs’
- To involve relevant external stakeholders in the discussions
- To conduct a seminar for the managers and lower level managers on the European Statistics Code of Practice in relation to the ‘institutional framework’
- To conduct a seminar for top management on the importance of quality assurance

2. Expected output of the activity

- European Statistics Code of Practice presented and discussed with DoS managers and lower managers
- Description of how DoS can apply the European Statistics Code of Practice
- The top management and other managers of DoS familiar with the importance of quality of statistics
- Transfer of the Danish and in general the European Union, experience in the use of the European Statistics Code of Practice
- A lining up of work programme for the next activity (3.3, scheduled to 30th March - 3th April 2014)

3. ParticipantsDoSMr Mohammad Khalaf, Head of Quality Division (*Component Leader*)

The ‘Quality Team’.

The Director General, all Assistants to the Director General, all Directors from DoS as well as one Head of Division from each Directorate will be invited to participate in the seminars.

MS experts

Mr Lars Thygesen, Director, Sales and Marketing, Statistics Denmark

Mr Søren Schiønning Andersen, Head of Division, External Economy, Statistics Denmark

External Stakeholders taking part in the activity

External stakeholders from the government sector, private sector as well as individuals from academia will be invited to participate in the seminar.

Annex 2: Programme for the mission

Time	Place	Event	Purpose / detail
Monday, morning	Hotel / DoS	Meeting with RTA	To discuss the programme of the week
Monday, morning	DoS	Meeting with BC Component Leader and BC Experts	Follow-up since Activity 3.1
Monday, afternoon	DoS	Workshop with all Directors plus one Head of Division from each Directorate plus the quality team.	Workshop about the Code of Practice – the principles regarding ‘processes’.
Tuesday, morning	DoS	Workshop with external key users from the government sector, the private sector and individuals (Academia etc) plus the quality team	Workshop about the Code of Practice – the principles regarding ‘output’.
Tuesday, afternoon	DoS	Workshop with all Directors plus one Head of Division from each Directorate plus the quality team.	Workshop about the Code of Practice – the principles regarding ‘institutional framework’
Wednesday, morning	Crowne Plaza_	Kick off event	Twinning project kick off event
Wednesday, afternoon	DoS	Seminar with the Director General, Assistants to the Director General and all Directors	Seminar with top management on the importance of quality management
Thursday, morning	DoS	Meeting with BC Component Leader	Presentation of MS Experts’ findings and agreement on the reached conclusions. Discussion of the work programme for the next mission.
Thursday, morning	DoS	Ad-hoc meetings	Final clarifications with BC Experts, preparation of report and presentation for BC Project Leader
Thursday, afternoon	DoS	Debriefing with BC Project Leader	Conclusions and decisions and their consequences for the next activity and the implied work programme for BC Experts

Annex 3. Persons met

Data Users

	Name	Institute	Phone number	Email
1	Mohammed Anwar Al Shboul	Jordan German University	0772306670	Mohammed.Alshboul@Gju.edu.jo
2	Neda Al Sous	Applied Science University	0795666722	NidaaIsous@yahoo.com
3	Haitham Manayah	Jordan Central Bank	0777462980	Haitham.manaisa@cbj.gov.jo
4	Mohammed Obiedat	Jordan Customs	0795962077	Obeidatm@customs.gov.jo
5	Nayef Sawari	Jordan Customs	0772337330	Nayef_sawari@yahoo.com
6	Ziad Wrekikat	Income Tax	079907280	Ziad_wrekiat@yahoo.com
7	Rebah abde Al jawad Al Ajluni	Amman Industrial chamber	0795640402	rabah@aci.org.jo
8	Ibrahim Aliwan	Ministry of Planning	079939958	Ibrahim-e@mop.gov.jo
9	Hasan Abdullah	Housing Bank	0795456750	
10	Lana Hani	Jordan Commerce Chamber	0797108433	I.banihani@jocc.org.jo
11	Basam Kanan	National Information Technology Center	0777409817	kananjor@yahoo.co.uk
12	Mohammed Al Khalayleh	Amman Industrial Chamber	0798736593	Mohammad.kh@jci.org.jo

DoS:**Session 1**

Title / Name	Directorate/ Division
Mohammed Khalaf	Quality Assurance Division
Ahmad Mowafi	Analysis Division
Basim Ali Shannak	Planning and Strategy
Mohammad Damra	Head of Construction statistics division
Mohammad Al Assaf	Director of population and social statistics
Duraïd Al Shwawieh	Quality Assurance
Bassam Zain	Head of crops production division
Mohammad Al Khreishah	Head of Labor statistics
Salam Quetishat	Head of Analysis finance
Mohammad	
Ahmad Al Momani	Head of population statistics
Mohammad al shiab	Head of external research
Munther Badr	
Kamel	
Shaher Al Shawabkeh	Director of economics
Walid Battah	Head of QNA
Moawiah Alzghoul	Director of National accounts
Hiam Zyod	Coordinator training
Amer al Jamma	Head of labor force division
Mohammed al Jundi	Director of surveys and households
Khaled al Shatrat	Head of environment statistics

Session 2

Title / Name	Directorate/ Division
Mohammed Khalaf	Quality assurance head
Ahmad Mowafi	Counter part of twinning project
Mohammad Damrah	Head of construction department
Duraïd Shwawreh	Quality assurance
Bassam Zain	Head of Crops production division
Mohammad Al Khreishah	Head of Labor statistics
Mohammad Al Shiab	Head of external research
Walid Battah	Head of QNA
Khalid Alshatrat	Head of Environmental statistics
Hiam Zyod	Coordinator training
Amer Al Jammal	Head of Labour force division
Rana Swaidat	Programmer
Tayseer Anis	IT director
Basim Ali Shannak	Planning and strategy director

Top management

Middle management

Quality team:

Mohammad KHALAF (component leader)

Bassam Azzain

Baskim Shannak

Mohammad Damrah

Duraid Shawawreh

RTA Team:

Amal Aliah, RTA Assistant

Emad Talafha, Interpreter

Thomas Olsen, RTA