



CLOSING EVENT OF THE EU TWINNING PROJECT ON QUALITY OF OFFICIAL STATISTICS

Support to the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics
in aligning official statistics with the EU and
international standards, guidelines and best practices

Twinning Project IL/12/CRIS 2015/370-467
Funded by the European Union

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The illustrations in this publication were made by Silja Emmel, Statistics Denmark.

AGENDA

The Event will be moderated by Mr. Matan Hodorov, Commentator for Economic Affairs on Channel 10 News

8:30-9:00 GATHERING AND REGISTRATION

9:00-10:00 WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

Prof. Danny Pfeffermann

National Statistician & Dir. General, Central Bureau of Statistics

Mr. Emanuele Giaufret

Head of Delegation, the European Union to Israel

Ms. Signe Biering Nielsen

Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Denmark to Israel

Prof. Reuben Gronau

Chairman, Public Council for Statistics

Mr. Carsten Zangenberg

Dir. of Communication & Sales, Statistics Denmark

10:00-10:30 DATA AS A BASIS FOR INFORMED DECISION MAKING

Dr. Karnit Flug, Governor, Bank of Israel

10:30-10:50 WE HAVE A VISION! NSS STEERING COMMITTEE REPORT

Dr. Shmuel Abramzon

Head of Research, National Economic Council

10:50-11:20 COFFEE BREAK

11:20-11:40 CRISES AND RESPONSES: MILESTONES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF COORDINATION AND STATISTICAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Mr. Ari Paltiel

Dir. of Statistical Quality Management Department, Central Bureau of Statistics

11:40-13:10 WHAT'S HURTING? CHALLENGES IN COORDINATING THE STATISTICAL SYSTEM

Panel Participants:

Ms. Michal Fink

Deputy Dir. General of Strategy & Policy Planning, Ministry of Economy & Industry

Prof. Tamar Shohat,

Dir. of Israel Center for Disease Control, Ministry of Health

Mr. Avi Cohen, Dir. General, Ministry for Social Equality

Mr. Shachar Bracha

Deputy Dir. General of Strategy & Policy Planning, Government ICT Authority

Mr. Eyal Zandberg

Head of Public Law, Department of Consulting & Legislation, Ministry of Justice

Mr. Oren Cohen

Deputy Dir. General for Governance and Social Affairs, Prime Minister's Office

Dr. Rachel Sheinin, CEO, Economic Models Ltd.

Prof. Ron Kenett

Senior Research Fellow, the Samuel Neaman Institute, Technion and Chairman, KPA Group

13:10-14:00 THE TWINNING PROJECT – FROM PLAN TO IMPLEMENTATION

Ms. Sigalit Mazeh

Dir. of International Relations & Statistical Coordination Department, Central Bureau of Statistics

Ms. Aline Attias, Big Data Platform Manager, Ministry of Health

Mr. Erez Osman

Dir. of Economic Policy & Statistics, Ministry of Agriculture & Rural Development

Prof. Avi Degani, CEO, President, GeoCartography Knowledge Group

14:00-14:10 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Mr. Yoel Finkel, Associate National Statistician, Central Bureau of Statistics

14:10-15:00 LUNCH

THE TWINNING INSTRUMENT



Twinning is a European Union instrument for institutional cooperation between Public Administrations of EU Member States and beneficiary countries. The tool was originally launched in May 1998 to assist candidate countries to the EU in aligning their systems to the requirements of the *acquis communautaire*.

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.

Since 2004, the Twinning instrument is also available to some of the EU Eastern and Southern Neighbourhood partner countries. Twinning can support the approximation of national laws, regulations and quality standards to those of EU Member States in the framework of Cooperation or Association agreements signed with the EU. Twinning always focuses on sharing best practices.

In Israel, Twinning refers back to the EU-Israel European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) Action Plan that was adopted on 11 April 2005. The Action Plan recommends various actions in the field of statistics:

THE TWINNING INSTRUMENT



- Increase awareness of EU and international statistical methods in relevant statistical areas, and examine the possibility of further harmonisation;
- Elaborate a strategy for increased awareness of European standards in the relevant statistical areas, including foreign trade;
- Enhance co-operation with relevant Commission services;
- Improve co-operation on establishment of statistics on trade in services and migration statistics.

To set up Twinning Projects, the European Union relies on the co-operation and administrative experience of EU Member States which mobilise public expertise both from public administrations and semi-public bodies.

Once a beneficiary country decides that a Twinning Project can provide clear added value for its modernisation process, a call is launched simultaneously in the 28 EU Member States (through a national contact point network) on the initiative of the beneficiary public administration. After receiving the proposals, a selection committee (on which the beneficiary and EU Delegation are represented) awards the project to an EU Member State or a consortium of EU Member States and the project can start.

INTRODUCTION – The Twinning Team



Dear Friends/Colleagues,

Since March 2016, the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics (ICBS) has partnered with Statistics Denmark as leading partner to implement a 30-month EU funded Twinning Project with the assistance of experts from Statistics Poland, Statistics Netherlands (CBS-NL), Statistics Sweden (SCB), the UK Office of National Statistics (ONS), the UK Statistics Authority (UKSA), the Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT), and the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies in France (INSEE).

The overall objective of the Twinning Project was to assist the ICBS in aligning official Israeli statistics with standards, guidelines, and best practices from the European Union and from international organizations.

During the course of the Twinning Project, the ICBS established a Steering Committee for the National Statistical System (NSS) that will work in cooperation with the ICBS in formulating a vision of official statistics in Israel as well as establishing an organizational structure and mechanisms for coordinating statistical quality assurance in the NSS.

In today's event, 30 May 2018, we are celebrating the achievements of the Twinning Project as well as launching of the National Statistical System in Israel.

This publication has been compiled in order to provide you with some

background information, the main achievements of the Twinning project as well as the future plans. We hope that all users of official statistics will benefit from the results achieved in this project.

Finally, we would like to thank everyone who supported the Twinning Team with the implementation of this project for sharing professional experience and personal time. In particular, we wish to thank ICBS staff members who participated and invested their valuable time in the activities, ICBS management who supported us all along, our partners from the National Statistical System who joined the activities and last but not least, all our partners and experts from the EU who we hope enjoyed and benefitted from our joint work as much as we did.

Sincerely,

Mr. Yoel Finkel
ICBS Twinning Project Leader

Ms. Sigalit Mazeh
**ICBS Project Leader Deputy and
Component Leader of Micro-data
Services to Researchers**

Ms. Batia Attali
**RTA Counterpart and Component Leader of
Quality Management of Official Statistics**

Mr. Nitzan Hachohen
**Component Leader for Improving the
quality and the efficiency of field surveys**

Mr. Jesper Ellemose Jensen
**Statistics Denmark Twinning
Project Leader**

Ms. Charlotte Nielsen
Resident Twinning Adviser (RTA)

Dr. Moshe Yanai
**Component Leader of Infrastructures for
Agricultural Statistics**

Ms. Tamar Rand
RTA Assistant

INTRODUCTION

Head of Delegation,
The European Union Delegation to Israel



Dear Friends/Colleagues,

Twinning is a European Union initiative that was originally designed to help candidate countries acquire the necessary skills and experience to adopt and implement EU legislation prior to joining the European Union. Twinning projects significantly contribute to paving the way for the accession of new Member States to the EU. In light of this success, in 2004 it was decided to open up this initiative also to the EU's neighbouring countries in order to strengthen and diversify our bilateral relations in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy.

It's not a secret that each and every Twinning project deepens our cooperation and the relations between Israel and the European Union. Twinning supports initiatives by Israeli ministries and agencies to learn from European expertise, and harmonise regulations. This official cooperation, together with member states, brings the EU and Israel closer in many fields including law, education, health, environmental protection, transportation, agriculture, data security, consumer protection and equal opportunity in employment.

In the present case, Statistics Denmark proposed an outstanding project from the outset and has been working hand-in-hand with the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics for 30 months.

No one would argue with the fact that we all, from policy makers, to the private sector, to individual citizens, rely on accurate data and statistics.

For the government here, this has been accentuated by the accession of Israel to the OECD, which required from the Central Bureau of Statistics in Israel additional efforts in order to produce official statistics in conformity with international and European standards.

By teaming it up with a leading European Bureau of Statistics, Statistics Denmark, this project supported the Central Bureau of Statistics to align official Israeli statistics with the EU and other international organisations' standards, guidelines, and best practice, in a number of different fields:

- Quality management of official statistics;
- Microdata for researchers;
- Infrastructure for agricultural statistics;
- Methodological and geo-spatial tools for improving the quality and the efficiency of field surveys.

The Central Bureau of Statistics is a crucial actor for transparent and informed decision-making necessary for having an accountable government of a democratic society. It is the foundation both for the government but also every citizen in understanding their society, economy and all aspects of a country's reality. It does not function in isolation, it is a hub: it gathers, aggregates and provides data. It is therefore essential that the CBS is open to external stakeholders, whether data users or data suppliers. I am pleased to say that this spirit of inclusiveness was at the heart of this project from day one.

Yours sincerely,

Emanuele Giaufret
Head of Delegation, the EU Delegation to the State of Israel

INTRODUCTION

National Statistician,
The Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics



Dear Friends/Colleagues,

We are approaching the end of the second Twinning Project on Statistics in Israel, which provides a good opportunity to assess its accomplishments—both with respect to Israel's National Statistical System (NSS), which we have recently established within the framework of the Project, and from the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics ("ICBS") perspective.

The Project involved many administrative, managerial and methodological challenges: collaboration with other members of the NSS and with policy makers, dealing with broad generic topics on the one hand, and with more focused, specialized topics on the other hand, and acting concurrently in the realms of administration, methodology and technology.

We started already the implementation of the main topics that have been formulated and researched over the course of the Project. These include remote access to microdata for researchers, improving the quality of the data and of the products derived from them by the NSS, applying new technologies for data collection, improving our agricultural data bases, and more.

There is no question in my mind that the Twinning Project helped to improve the ICBS performance, mostly due to the ongoing collaboration with our main partner in this Project, Statistics Denmark. The project included also visits of several European experts to the ICBS and not

INTRODUCTION

National Statistician,
The Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics



less important, visits of ICBS staff to counterpart national statistical institutions in Denmark, Italy, United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Poland, France and Sweden.

I am representing the governing board of the ICBS and the entire NSS in thanking our partners from the EU, and particularly our partners from Statistics Denmark, for their dedication and contributions to the success of this Project. The ICBS will do everything in its hands to deepen the international relationships that have been established in the framework of the Twinning Project in order to further improve the quality and timeliness of the products of our national statistical system.

Yours sincerely,

Prof. Danny Pfeffermann
National Statistician and Director of Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics

INTRODUCTION

National Statistician, Statistics Denmark



Dear Friends/Colleagues,

The Twinning instrument has for many years supported institutions in the European Union's neighbourhood countries in working with their counterpart or "twin" institution within the European Union. This is the second time the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics (ICBS) and Statistics Denmark have engaged in a Twinning Project. The implementation of the current project will run until the end of August 2018.

Although European countries are regulated by the same European legislation and statistical requirements there are several and substantial differences in the EU Member States' (MS) implementation of the various statistics. Some countries like Denmark rely heavily on administrative records and electronic data collection, while others like France and Poland have significant knowledge in field interviews and constantly strive to optimize sample design and IT tools supporting the data collection. Coordination and quality work in the National Statistical System is another area where there are common goals but many different ways of management and implementation.

For this Twinning Project, Statistics Denmark and ICBS have partnered up with MS experts from Denmark, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, and the UK. Altogether, more than 25 MS experts have participated in activities in Israel and ICBS has met with more than 50 MS experts during study visits to EU countries. The large number of partner countries and experts ensured cutting-edge knowledge about the various production models used inside the European Statistical System. Each MS country and its staff has contributed with experience

and knowledge to the project and given the participating ICBS staff a close and personal experience of what is currently happening inside the European Union in the field of statistics.

An external monitoring of the project requested by the European Union Delegation to Israel concluded that the project was very successful and fully supported ICBS in realizing the vision originally stated for the project. It should be noted that one of the outcomes of the evaluation was that the EU Services are recommended to consider this project as "best practice".

MS experts travelling to Israel or meeting ICBS staff during study visits have felt that their input and experiences have been highly appreciated and well received. All activities were carefully planned and ICBS staff and stakeholders worked hard and with passion to achieve the goals for each activity. MS experts have found their participation both personally and professionally rewarding.

As leading EU Member State Partner, Statistics Denmark would like to express our sincere gratitude to all staff from ICBS and from the EU Member States that made this project not only possible but also a great success.

With the hope that the inspiring and rewarding cooperation between the ICBS, Statistics Denmark and the other MS Institutions will continue after the end of this Twinning Project.

Yours Sincerely,

Jørgen Elmeskov
Director General, Statistics Denmark

KEY PROJECT DATA

Twinning Contract Number	IL/12 - CRIS 2015/370-467
Project Title	Support to the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics in aligning official statistics with the EU and other international standards, guidelines and best practices
Twinning Partners (MS and BC)	<p>MS: Lead by Statistics Denmark assisted by Statistics Netherlands (CBS-NL), Statistical Poland (CSO), Statistics Sweden (SCB), the UK Office of National Statistics (ONS), the UK Statistics Authority (UKSA), the Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT), National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies France (INSEE)</p> <p>Beneficiary Institution: Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics (ICBS)</p>
Notification of contract	09 February 2016
Implementation period	01 March 2016 – 31 August 2018
Duration of the project:	24 months + 6 months by Addendum = 30 months
Kick-off Meeting:	13 April 2016
Budget	1,200,000 EUR
Overall objective	To enhance the quality and international comparability of Israeli official statistics.

Components	<p>The Twinning Project includes four components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Quality management of official statistics B Microdata services to researchers C Infrastructures for agricultural statistics D Methodological and geo-spatial tools for improving the quality and the efficiency of field surveys
Mandatory Results (MR)	<p>MR1: The establishment of an organizational system (organizational unit and work processes) responsible for the Quality Management of official statistics in ICBS and in the National Statistical System.</p> <p>MR2: Setting up an overall program for providing researchers with access to microdata, based on the analysis of the current situation and a designated strategic plan.</p> <p>MR3: Setting up an overall program for the establishment and maintenance of a farms register to be used as a framework for agricultural statistics.</p> <p>MR4: Optimization of field workload allocation using geo-spatial tools for managing field surveys in designated areas.</p>

FURTHER INFORMATION IS AVAILBLE ONTHE WEBSITE

www.dst.dk/israel

www.cbs.gov.il/twinning/twinning_h.html

MS PROJECT PARTNERS



Statistics Denmark



UK Statistics Authority



Italian National Institute
of Statistics



Statistics Netherlands



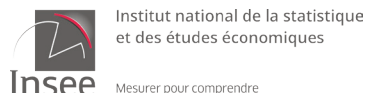
Statistics Sweden



Statistics Poland



UK Office of
National Statistics



National Institute of Statistics
and Economic Studies



THE PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM



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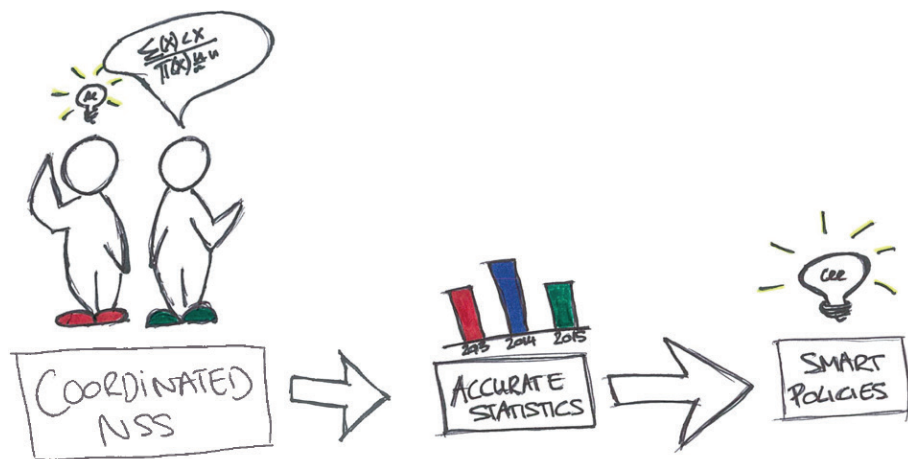
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OBJECTIVE

Establish an organizational structure for promoting and managing the quality of official statistics in the Israeli Central Bureau of statistics (ICBS) and in the National Statistical System (NSS) according to international standards.

BACKGROUND AND MAIN ACTIVITIES

Many different institutions produce official statistics in Israel: In certain areas, official statistics are produced by the ICBS, and in others, ministries and other national institutions take part in the production process and provide the data necessary to decision and policy makers.

Although all producers of Official Statistics - the ICBS and the Other National Authorities (ONA's) - constitute together the NSS, the system is generally poorly coordinated, leading to duplications and over-coverage in some statistical areas, and under-coverage or no coverage in others.

Despite the fact that government agencies have lots of administrative data at their disposal, and more additional data is collected in dedicated surveys, the data is not necessarily designed and collected in a way suitable for statistical purposes. In addition, not all official statistics published are consistent with international standards, nor provide the basic information necessary for users to understand the meaning of the data (definitions, explanations on the collection process etc.), thus challenging comparisons and combinations with other sources.

The 2016-2018 EU funded Twinning Project set out to improve the organization, coordination and cooperation in the NSS by sharing knowledge and resources in order to achieve a common goal: to ensure official statistics are produced and published based on common professional methods.

RESULTS

The most significant achievement of the project in this component is the assimilation of the concept of statistical quality with its significance according to international standards. It resulted in a shift from a perception of quality as pure statistical accuracy, to a multidimensional quality concept, understood from the user's perspective. Therefore, data of quality must meet the users' needs for information, be relevant and up-to-date.

In order for all producers of official statistics to make the same shift in concept, the community of all producers of official statistics was created, who should work together according to the same standards and speak a common language internally within the NSS and with users.

As part of the activities carried out in the project, a strategy was defined, an overall road map built and its implementation initiated.

A quality management department was established at the ICBS, international quality frameworks were adopted and quality management tools were introduced in the daily work.

In the NSS, contact persons for quality and coordination were nominated (by the partners in the system), from whom a steering committee was chosen to become the leader of the system, a training program was prepared for the ONAs and a first course in quality management was conducted by experts from the Italian National Institute of Statistic.

FUTURE PLANS

A comprehensive mapping of the NSS (producers, products, national needs for data, etc.) should be achieved with the aim of formulating a national work plan for the development and production of the needed official statistics. Concurrently, a framework of standards and practical tools for producing official statistics according to international standards should be adopted by the entire system.

COMPONENT

B

MICRODATA SERVICES TO RESEARCHERS



OBJECTIVE

Define an overall work plan for providing microdata services to researchers based on analysis of the current status and develop a dedicated strategy.

BACKGROUND AND MAIN ACTIVITIES

For many years, the ICBS has provided microdata services for researchers who are affiliated to academic and research institutions recognized by the National Statistician. Until now, the services provided for researchers included a lengthy bureaucratic process. In addition, preparing the files for researchers was done by the subject units as an integral part of their regular work. In other words, the work they performed for the researchers was not mentioned in the subject unit's work plans and as a result, the services provided did not meet the researchers' expectations nor answer the needs of the modern Israeli society. In addition, since work processes

were not updated (guidelines and procedures, rules for output checking, pricing policy etc.), they could not cope with the ever-increasing demands nor their growing complexity.

As part of the Twinning activities, the ICBS staff collaborated with experts from Statistics Denmark and CBS Netherlands in order to learn from their knowledge and experience in establishing a dedicated unit that will provide services for researchers and prepare the data files for them. In addition, establishing a remote access service to microdata for researchers with the appropriate level of confidentiality was part of the work.

RESULTS

One of the most significant outcomes of this project has been the establishment of a dedicated Research Service Unit within the International Relations and Statistical Coordination Department of the ICBS. The new unit will be responsible for all coordination and services provided to researchers, from the initial research request, through the preparation of the appropriate microdata in a secured environment, and until the final extraction of the research results from the research environment. The establishment of a dedicated unit is considered a major step towards developing a more efficient research service following international best practices.

It is important to mention that during the course of the project many improvements have been made to the existing research services.

Another significant result of the project was the design of one IT integrated solution that will support all required research services electronically: From the initial research request, to interactive view of the available variable list, the management of the research files and most important, the remote access facilities to the researchers.

During the course of the project, both the establishment of the research service unit as well as the allocation of funds for the remote access system have been obtained by the ICBS in the form of manpower and appropriate budget for the development of the IT system.

Finally, the ICBS has worked on an amendment to the Statistics Ordinance in order to clarify the legal framework that allows access to de-identified micro data for research purpose.

FUTURE PLANS

Future plans include continuing to improve services for researchers, shortening work processes and the time needed to obtain access to research files, as well as launching the remote access system for researchers.



OBJECTIVE

Construct an action plan for establishing and maintaining a farms register by conducting an agricultural census. The farms register is intended to serve as a statistical frame for the production of agriculture statistics.

BACKGROUND AND MAIN ACTIVITIES

The last full agriculture census in Israel was conducted in 1981. Since then,

the agricultural sector has undergone numerous changes e.g. a major decrease in the activity of farmers' organizations and associations (which were the main providers of data on agricultural activities), privatization and changes in the size of agricultural farms. In addition, the statistical data collection method has changed from direct data collection from the farmers to collection mostly from administrative files. However, these administrative files vary in their quality and provide only a partial picture of the agricultural activity. Thus, currently, there is a lack of information, e.g. about the size and number of agricultural farms in Israel.

As part of the EU Twinning Project, a series of activities took place that assisted in the creation and updating of an agricultural farms frame. The activities included mapping and identifying data sources and developing methods for integrating them, developing a methodology for determining

the threshold for defining a farm, adjusting the agricultural census questionnaire and establishing a plan for updating the farms register and for data collection based on follow-up surveys.

RESULTS

The Twinning Project contributed to the improvement of the quality of agricultural statistics and its adaption to EU standards. This was accomplished by examining the methodology for building a farms frame, the definitions of agricultural farm characteristics and by learning about data collection tools used by EU countries. Furthermore, an adaptation was made to the subjects of investigation and the presentation of the findings was improved.

The project was planned and carried out in full cooperation with stakeholders, especially the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and assisted in understanding the great importance of conducting an agriculture census and hence, contributed to the success in raising the required budget for the agriculture census.

FUTURE PLANS

The knowledge gained throughout the project will assist in conducting the agricultural census (in 2018) while complying with international standards, improving agricultural statistics and integrating administrative data sources together with routine follow-up surveys.



OBJECTIVE

Improve the geo-spatial tools and the methodology that optimize the fieldwork of interviewers and supervisors. This objective is derived from recommendations given in the previous Twinning Project in 2013.

BACKGROUND AND MAIN ACTIVITIES

The Surveys Department realized that the travel expenses for intercity travel of interviewers were very high. A joint effort of the IT Department, the Geographic Information System (GIS) Unit and the Surveys Department, resulted in the conclusion that the use of advanced digital mapping tools can assist in improving the quality and efficiency of data collection in field surveys. Thus, a diverse team with representatives of the IT, GIS, Statistical methodology and Survey Departments was established.

Until now, eight activities have taken place: Six activities in Israel with European experts from Denmark, Poland and France, one study visit to Statistics Poland, and one study visit to the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE) in France. On the study visits to Poland and France, ICBS staff gained more detailed knowledge and hands-on experiences about the Polish and French system for collecting data. In Poland, the study visit also included a visit to the Statistical Computing

Centre in Radom to see a demo of the system. The study visit to France was dedicated to fieldwork and included a visit to the regional office in Rouen in Normandy. A second study visit to France is scheduled to take place in July 2018 and will focus on sampling methodology and IT systems, and will include a visit to the National Computer Centre in Lille. A final activity will take place in Israel in order to follow up on all completed activities as well as working on a strategy for the future.

RESULTS

The project helped re-thinking the work of the field interviewers in Israel. The European experts recommended making substantial changes in the fieldwork. The most significant change planned is a shift from the current situation where each interviewer collect data for only one survey to a multi-survey approach with each interviewer collecting data for several surveys simultaneously. Thus, planned sampling and allocating workloads that take geographic considerations into account, will improve the efficiency of the interviewer's work. This new approach led to the design of an innovative data collection system, the Multi Surveys System (MSS), which will enable collection of data in a multi-mode and multi survey method.

FUTURE PLANS

The Survey Department, in collaboration with the IT and Statistical Methodology departments will develop an MSS system that will collect data for all social surveys conducted by ICBS. ICBS is currently working on securing funding for this project. When implemented, the MSS will give ICBS significant efficiency gains through a cutting-edge IT solution.