Forwarding Armenian Statistics Through Twinning

AM09/ENP-PCA/TP/04

MISSION REPORT

on

Quality Management

A4.4 Maintenance of PX Web

Mission carried out by
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Final version

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List of Abbreviations

MS   Member State
NSSRA National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia
QWG   Working Group on Quality

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1. General comments

This report is the final report in component A and describes the follow up work done to the activities in A4.1 and A4.2. The activity completed the work on armstatbank.am which is now fully functioning as according to plan.

The MS Experts would like to express their warm thanks to all officials and individuals met for the kind support and valuable information, which was received during the stay in Armenia.
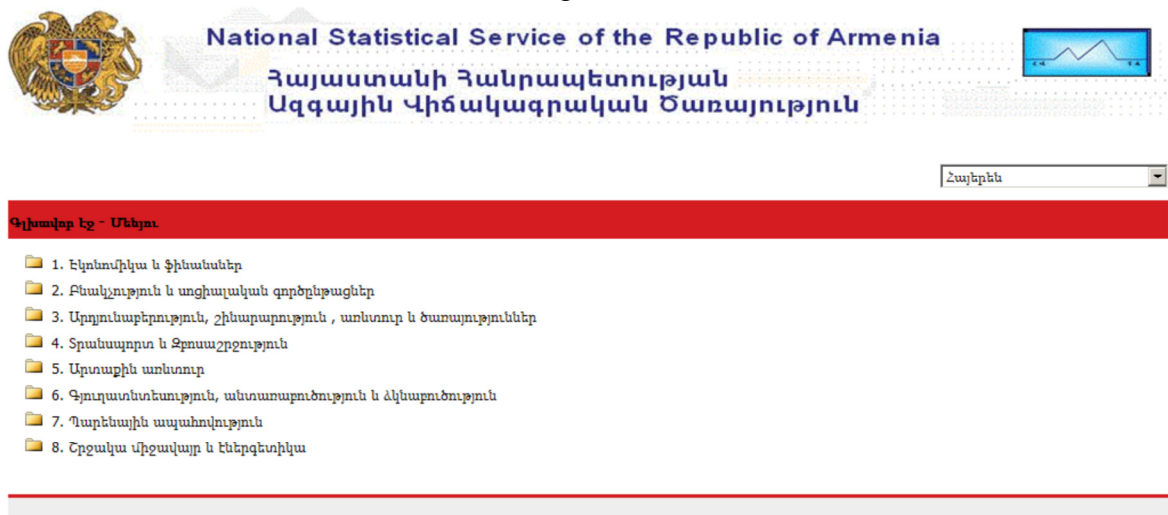
The views and observations stated in this report are those of the MS Experts, and do not necessarily correspond to the views of Statistics Denmark, but represents our best professional opinion.

2. Actions and results

During the mission the experts undertook the following actions:

- Meeting with RTA and BC Component Leader: overview of actions done since previous activity and agreement on the work programme for the stay
- Provided additional training in how best to produce PX-files using PX-Edit software
- Presentation to Dissemination and Statistical Subject matter units on Metadata standards in relation to armstatbank.am tables
- Assisted the NSSRA in making quality checks to the already produced files
- Assisted the NSSRA in adapting PX-Web software as the basis for armstatbank.am
- Participated in the twinning projects final event meeting

Below some of the activities are described in greater detail.

Training

Training in PC-AXIS / PX-Edit and PX-Web was initiated during activity A4.1 in April 2012 (report is available from www.dst.dk/armenia), and was followed up in activity A4.2 in September 2012. The last training activity was conducted just before the opening of Armstatbank.am.

Upgrade of PX-Web

In December 2012 a new version of the dot.Net PX-Web software was released. One of the purposes of this activity was to assist in installing the new version. The December version does add some new functionality (population pyramids and an upgrade to the excel format) but is mainly about correcting small and larger bugs. The upgrade was therefore performed during thus missions as recommended in the mission report from A4.2.

Additional tables

At the opening the armstatbank.am contained about 30 tables. The number of tables has now been extended to more than 70. There is still some way to go as NSSRA should aim to have at least one table for each statistical area before the system can be said to be fully established. This will require more than 100 tables.

More complex tables

Most of the tables in armstatbank.am are still sourced from printed publications. This means that the tables have relatively few variables (2 or 3 in addition to the time variable). It is recommended to add tables with more variables (eg. 4 or 5) as this will allow users to extract more detailed and more complex information.

External trade

External trade at the 4 digit kevel is currently compiled and disseminated by the NSSRA using another system. To ensure that www.armstatbank.am is complete it is highly recommended that the trade data is also include in armstatbank.am. Firstly, it is important to use only a single platform for dissemination as users otherwise gets confused, and secondly way too many of the organization's resources are used when running two different systems.

When entering the external trade into PX-Web the handling of time should be given careful consideration. In the current setup the presentation of monthly data is split into two different variables. One variable for year and one variable for month.

This approach is not recommendable. Instead it is better to have a single variable presenting time. This variable could / should have the format yearmonth. Fx 2013M01, 2013M02 or 2013Q1, 2013Q2 if quarterly data. This approach will ensure that the values of the variable presenting time will always be correctly sorted.

As the name of the months are not sortable alphabetically using the current approach, users will have difficulties presenting data over time or as time series. The other major problem with the current approach is that users can select data that are not logically available. ie. December 2013, but writing this report in February, the month of January is more interesting, because for January users can not know if data is available in another system but not yet available in this particular system. Therefore the variable time must be sortable and must only contain values that have data.

EU logo

On the request of EU the NSSRA had since September added an EU logo to the armstat-bank.am. Also software for monitoring the usage of armstatbank.am had been added.

The fact that NSSRA staff had added these features without consultations with Statistics Denmark shows the concept and mode of operations of the software is fully understood by the relevant staff in IT.

Further development of the www.armstatbank.am

The NSSRA is committed to further extending the armstatbank.am so that it in the long run will contain all statistical data produced by the NSSRA. As a tool for monitoring the use of armstatbank.am has been put in place by the NSSRA the management will be able to see the progress in use over time.

The next logical step will be to implement external trade statistics at 2, 4, 6 and 8 digit levels.

In the middle of 2013 a map extension to PX-Web is expected to be released by Statistics Finland. When it becomes available the NSSRA should add the component and data at a regional (municipality level or smaller) to the armstatbank.am

Practical comments on PX files in armstatbank.am

In the report from activity A4.2 a number of practical recommendations and advices concerning the production of files are given. The recommendations are still valid, but in general it seems that the quality has improved and that the NSSRA now produces files and updates already existing files with ease.

Final event

A final event /closure ceremony was conducted on Wednesday 13 -2013. The event took place at the Erebuni Plaza business centre. Ms Claudia Junker represented Eurostat and talked about the importance of internationally comparable statistics and expressed her satisfaction with the progress made by the NSSRA in general and especially through the Forwarding Armenian Statistics through Twinning (FAST) project. The head of the EU delegation Mr Traian Hristea also participated together with the Armenian Minister of Economy Mr Tigran Davtyan. Mr Raupach represented DESTATIS as Statistics Denmark's partner in the project.

Mr Thygesen, the MS project leader, and the project's RTA, Mr Thomas Bie, presented the main results of the project. Before the event both Ms Claudia Junker and the president of the NSSRA Mr Mnatsakanyan was interviewed by Armenian TV. At the end of the event the armstatbank.am was again presented to the audience.

3. Conclusions and recommendations

The following recommendations were provided:

- Continue to produce PX file state a clear goal of number of PX files that must be ready and available a the end of 2013
- Disseminate external trade statistics using www.armstatbank.am and concentrated time in single variable
- Add data at a more detailed geographical level
- Change the time format to a combined year and month variable
- Continue to monitor the external use of armstatbank.am
- Consider developing more detailed introductory material for armstatbank.am users
- Get the different search engines to recognize armstatbank.am when statistical data are being asked for
- Participate in the international PC-Axis meeting so that the NSSRA can influence the future development of the software used

Annex 1. Terms of Reference and meeting programme

9th meeting in the Steering Committee

1. Purpose of activity
The purpose of this activity is to participate in the 9th meeting in the Steering Committee and the preparations hereof, and the official Closing Ceremony of the project. The last activity A4.4 related to the development of the PX Web software will be implemented.

1. Expected output of the activity
PX-Web / ARMSTATBANK will be further developed, and the introduction of Foreign Trade statistics will be planned. The project will be finalized with a meeting in the Steering Committee and the official Closing Ceremony.

2. Participants
Mr Stepan Mnatsakanyan, President of NSSRA (*BC Project Leader*)
Ms Anahit Safyan, Head of International Statistical Cooperation Division
Mr Vanush Davtyan, Head of IT Division
Ms Narine Musheghyan, Head of Dissemination Division

Mr. Lars Thygesen, Director, Statistics Denmark (*MS Project Leader*)
Mr Ringo Raupach, Head of Division, Destatis (*Junior Project Leader*)
Mr Jesper Ellemose Jensen, Chief Adviser, Statistics Denmark

Other NSSRA staff members taking part in the activity
Staff from IT and Dissemination Divisions.

3. Meeting Programme for MS Experts: 12-13 February 2013

Time	Place	Event	Purpose / detail
Tuesday, 12 Feb. 12:00	Congress Hotel	Meeting with RTA	Update on the Twinning Project
12:30	NSSRA	Meeting with BC Project Leader	Preparations for Steering Committee meeting
14:00	NSSRA	Update of PX Web	Installation of latest version of PX Web, and discussions of how to introduce Foreign Trade statistics in ARMSTATBANK (Mr Jesper Ellemose Jensen)
14:15-15:30	NSSRA	Steering Committee meeting	9th and last meeting in the SCM: Conclusions and preparations for Closing Event
Thursday, 13 Feb. 10:00-13:00	Erebuni Plaza	Closing Ceremony of the Twinning project	See separate Agenda.
Afternoon	NSSRA	Internal debriefing with BC Project Leader	Conclusions regarding PX Web and ARMSTATBANK. Final agreements and project conclusions

Annex 2. Persons met

Mr Stepan Mnatsakanyan, President of NSSRA (*BC Component Leader*)
Ms Anahit Safyan, Head of International Statistical Cooperation Division
Ms Claudia Junker, Head of International Cooperation, Eurostat
Mr Hristea Traian, Head of EU Delegation to Armenia
Mr Vova Obyantsev, Head of IT Division, NSSRA
Ms Aida Martirosyan, Head of IT Development, NSSRA
Ms Sona Manukian, IT specialist, NSSRA
Ms Narine Mushegyan, Head of Dissemination Division, NSSRA