

TWINNING CONTRACT

AM/14/ENP/ST/15

Strengthening of the National Statistical System of Armenia – Phase II



MISSION REPORT

on

Statistical Information Dissemination System

Activity 1.3: Cooperation with users and producers II

Mission carried out by

Ms. Annegrete Wulff, Statistics Denmark

Mr. Lars Thygesen, Statistics Denmark

29 February – 3 March 2016

Final version



National Statistical Service
Republic of Armenia



Expert contact information

*Annegrete Wulff
Statistics Denmark
Sejrøgade 11
DK-2100 Copenhagen Ø
Denmark
Tel: +45 3917 3155
Email: awu@dst.dk*

*Lars Thygesen
Statistics Denmark
Sejrøgade 11
DK-2100 Copenhagen Ø
Denmark
Tel +45 2840 3941
Email: lthygesen@gmail.com*

Table of contents

- 1. General comments 4
- 2. Assessment and results 4
 - 2.1 Cooperation with users: Ministries 4
 - 2.2 Cooperation with users: Researchers 5
 - 2.3 Strategy or template for cooperation with users..... 6
 - 2.4 User satisfaction survey 7
 - 2.5 Template for user focus groups meetings 7
 - 2.6 Review of draft dissemination strategy 7
- 3. Recommendations 7
- 4. Road map and time plan until next mission 7
- Annex 1: Terms of Reference 8
- Annex 2. Programme for the mission..... 10
- Annex 3: Persons met..... 11
- Annex 4: List of questions asked at the user meetings 13
- Annex 5. Template for cooperation with users 14
- Annex 6. Template for user focus groups meetings..... 16

List of Abbreviations

EU	European Union
NSS	National Statistical System (of official statistics)
NSSRA	National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia

1. General comments

This mission report was prepared within the Twinning Project “Strengthening of the National Statistical System of Armenia – Phase II”. This was the second activity in component 1 and the actions planned for this activity were carried out as scheduled.

The purposes of the mission were:

- Cooperation with users:
 - Ministries & researchers
 - Strategy or template for cooperation with users
 - User satisfaction survey
 - Template for user focus groups meetings
- Review of draft dissemination strategy (named concept paper)

The consultants would like to express their sincere thanks to all officials and individuals met for the kind support and valuable information which they received during the stay in Armenia, and which highly facilitated their work. The views and observations stated in this report are those of the consultants and do not necessarily correspond to the views of EU, NSSRA or Statistics Denmark.

2. Assessment and results

2.1 Cooperation with users: Ministries

NSSRA had invited representatives of the ministries and similar state bodies for a focus group meeting, which was held the 2nd day of the mission. There was a strong interest for the arrangement, and 50 participants came and participated in a very successful user meeting.

Focus was on getting participants to express their needs in a very honest way, and to listen carefully and understand these needs, so that NSSRA services could be adapted. Comments and advice from the ministries for further development and prioritizing of the dissemination will be taken into account by NSSRA in the development of services over the coming months and years.

Summary of the ministries' needs:

- Cooperation with NSSR generally is working very well
- There is great trust in NSSRA
- Regarding the contents of the statistics, indicators: within economic areas were evaluated as satisfactory, while it was mentioned that more details are needed within Labour market statistics, e.g. more detailed regional data.
- Time series are “damaged” by breaks, e.g. GDP (shift of SNA version), and there was a wish that NSSRA should as far as possible try to bridge these breaks.
- Output format: Excel is needed for further processing, which can be accommodated by the ArmStatBank
- Source for statistics:
 - Armstatbank is well known and heavily used (80 per cent of the participants)
 - ArmDevinfo is unknown and not used by the ministries
- The release calendar is used by almost all. The release of new statistics at 12 noon is fine and it works well in practice.
- Information about errors in published results would be important - IF errors ever occurred!
- Documentation of methodology and quality (Quality declarations): Most ministries are satisfied with this. Moreover, NSSRA staff is accessible for explanations, this is sometimes used as supplement
- Search functionality on the web site: As experienced users it is easy for the participants to find what they wanted because they know the structure of the site. Therefore, they didn't need to use the search function very often. Google is also used.

- Participants mentioned as priority fields for improvement: Regional distribution of different statistics, e.g. water supply and consumption
- Participants valued this kind of meeting and expressed a strong wish to have similar meetings, as well as training courses and workshops
- Participants were well aware of the Confidentiality concerns and accepted that individual data cannot be provided
- All agreed that NSSRA is considered open and transparent.



Focus meeting of ministries in NSSRA 1 March 2016

2.2 Cooperation with users: Researchers

NSSRA had invited representatives of universities and research communities for a focus group meeting, which was held the 3rd day of the mission. Also in this group there was a strong interest for the arrangement, and 25 participants came and participated in a very successful user meeting. There was a very lively and interactive discussion.

As in the ministries' meeting, focus was on getting participants to express their needs in a very honest way, and for NSSRA to listen carefully and understand these needs, so that NSSRA services could be adapted. Comments and advice from the researchers for further development and prioritizing of the dissemination will be taken into account by NSSRA in the development of services over the coming months and years.

Summary of researchers' needs:

- NSSRA is the researchers' preferred source of statistics.
- More disaggregated statistics are needed on the web site, e.g. *regional breakdown, even sometimes to the level of villages*, age. Energy balance by sector and industry was mentioned as example.
- Individual data access: Researchers are well aware of confidentiality. But disaggregated and flexible de-identified micro data is a wish.
- The researchers find their statistics in www.armstat.am and by direct contact with NSSRA experts (and sometimes regional offices)

- Only about half of the participants knew Armstatbank, and even less have been using it. Therefore, there is a need for NSSRA to better inform about this source
- The release calendar is not so well known, and again marketing needed
- Methodology and documentation: Quality declarations are not known and NSSRA ought to better inform researchers about these
- Cooperation works in general fine,
- Coordination of data reporting: Reporting to NSSR (research and science statistics) works fine. However, the same (or overlapping) indicators are reported to several other authorities, which is very burdensome for the research institutes. Therefore, NSSRA should try to get a better coordination with these other authorities.
- Search functionality on the web site is evaluated as good and useful. Google is also used
- Errors in statistics: Never happens!
- In general, there is a high degree of trust in NSSRA. However, it is a problem that statistics from other sources are sometimes in conflict with NSSRA. Therefore, there is a strong need to enhance the coordination of the National Statistical System.
- Regarding the teaching activities carried out by the participants in their institutions, the web site is important. NSSRA could cooperate and agitate for more teaching resources in the use of statistics
- NSSRA is very *open* for cooperation and students are heavy users of armstatbank
- Researchers were very interested in NSSRA organizing seminars, training, and workshops. It would be great if these could include the students.
- Priority needs for improvement were:
 - Quality of data,
 - Reporting formats should be updated in cooperation with respondents.



Happy researchers after the focus group meeting in NSSRA, 2 March 2016

2.3 Strategy or template for cooperation with users

The experts outlined different possibilities of user involvement and a list giving the purpose of the respective measures was produced. This draft list is added in annex 5. However, it has to be further described by NSSRA.

NSSRA will use the list as a basis for deciding which user initiatives they will take in the coming years.

Discussion on possibilities with user involvement covered

- Focus group meetings
- User satisfaction surveys
- User committees
- Usability test
- Information meetings and training
- User behaviour – web analytics.

2.4 User satisfaction survey

NSSRA has developed a user satisfaction survey that is available on the web site. The experts suggested some smaller changes in the formulation of questions. Detailed comments were provided. It is good to be concrete in the formulation as the purpose is to find out how to improve the service, rather than having a positive picture.

The survey is manually set up on the web without “internal logic”. It was suggested to look into tools for web questionnaires like SurveyMonkey.com It will be thus possible to define questions that require only one answer, multiple choice, ranking, routing, etc. A small demo questionnaire using SurveyMonkey was produced within the mission.

2.5 Template for user focus groups meetings

A guide for conducting focus group meetings has been used during the first 3 focus group meetings. It can also be used structuring the coming meetings. The important thing is to conduct the meeting in a way that invites the audience to talk and the NSSRA to listen. That is why there should be a mediator who is not directly responsible for the topic being discussed. The guidelines are in annex 6.

2.6 Review of draft dissemination strategy

The draft dissemination strategy has been reviewed. It follows sound principles and is structured according to the values in European Code of Practice. There is a specific focus on users and their needs. This paper gives the overall ideas and objectives, while a more detailed paper describing specific activities and organization of the work could be used as the “dissemination policy”.

3. Recommendations

NSSRA should continue the user involvement by inviting other important user groups. However, also do it step-wise. This will allow the staff to get experience and learn from each meeting. And it is important to get the time to follow up on the expressed views from users.

NSSRA should develop a priority plan for dissemination activities and user relations for the next year.

Likewise, NSSRA should make a plan for external training courses during the next year.

4. Road map and time plan until next mission

Cooperation with users:

Prepare and send the ministries and researchers reports on the outcome of the focus group meetings. Tell them what NSSRA is going to do to satisfy their needs.

Annex 1: Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference

EU Twinning Project AM/14/ENP/ST/15

29 February - 3 March 2016

Component 1: Statistical Information Dissemination System

Activity 1.3: Cooperation with users and producers II

0. Mandatory results and benchmarks for the component

Mandatory results:

- Statistical Information Dissemination System improved (July 2017)

Benchmarks:

- Statistical Information Dissemination System in place (July 2017)
- Statistical Information Dissemination System Strategy paper developed and adopted by the State Council on Statistics (July 2017)
- User satisfaction survey questionnaire updated, tested and published at the NSSRA website (July 2017)
- Staff of NSSRA trained on issues related to the Statistical Information Dissemination (July 2017)

1. Purpose of the activity

- Hold meetings with user and producer groups
- Receive input to user satisfaction survey and dissemination strategy from users and producers
- Further development of plan to cooperate with users and producers
- To involve relevant stakeholders in the discussions

2. Expected output of the activity

- Implementation of initial stages of the Strategy and plan for cooperation with users
- Implementation of initial stages of the Strategy and plan for cooperation with other producers of official statistics
- More detailed plan for the future development
- Input to user satisfaction survey received
- A lining up of work programme for the next activity (Study visit to Statistics Denmark in June 2016)

3. Participants

NSSRA

Component leaders

- Mr. Stepan Mnatsakanyan
- Ms. Anahit Safyan
- Ms. Narine Musheghyan

Other staff

- Ms.Silva Ulubabyan
- Ms.Nelly Margaryan
- Ms.Gohar Nshanyan
- Ms. Alina Hunanyan
- Mrs. Amine Martikyan
- Mrs. Lilit Karapetyan

MS experts

Ms. Annegrete Wulff, Expert, Statistics Denmark

Mr. Lars Thygesen, Expert, Statistics Denmark

Other stakeholders taking part in the activity

Representatives also to be invited:

- Ministries
- Researchers / universities

Annex 2. Programme for the mission

Time	Place	Event	Purpose / detail
Monday, noon	Hotel / NSSRA	Meeting with RTA	To discuss the programme of the week
Monday, afternoon	NSSRA	Meeting with BC Component Leader and BC Experts	Assessment of situation and presentation by BC of the work conducted since last mission. Presentation by BC of the expected outcome of current mission.
Tuesday, morning	NSSRA	Meeting with BC Component Leader and BC Experts	Preparation of meetings with stakeholders
Tuesday, afternoon 14:00	NSSRA <i>In meeting room</i>	Meeting with stakeholders <i>(ministries)</i>	Meeting with stakeholders <i>(ministries)</i>
Wednesday, morning 11:00	NSSRA <i>In meeting room</i>	Meeting with stakeholders (<i>re- searchers / uni- versities</i>)	Meeting with stakeholders <i>(researchers / universities)</i>
Wednesday, afternoon	NSSRA	Meeting with BC Component Leader and BC Experts	Discussion on input to user satisfaction survey Discussion of draft dissemination strategy
Thursday, morning	NSSRA	Meeting with BC Component Leader	Development of plan to cooperate with users and producers
Thursday, morning	NSSRA	Ad-hoc meetings	Final clarifications with BC Experts, prepara- tion of report and presentation for BC Project Leader
Thursday, afternoon	NSSRA	Debriefing with BC Project Lead- er	Presentation of MS Experts' findings and agreement on the reached conclusions Conclusions and recommendations for the next activity and the implied work programme for BC Experts

Annex 3: Persons met

NSSRA:

- Stepan Mnatsakanyan, President of the NSSRA
- Anahit Safyan, Member of the State Council on Statistics of RA
- Narine Musheghyan, Statistical Information Dissemination and Public Relations Division
- Hasmik Soghomonyan, International Statistical Co-operation Division
- Lilit Karapetyan, Statistical Information Dissemination and Public Relations Division
- Alina Hunanyan, Statistical Information Dissemination and Public Relations Division
- Gohar Nshanyan, Statistical Information Dissemination and Public Relations Division
- Anush Khamoyan, Statistical Information Dissemination and Public Relations Division
- Nelly Margaryan, Statistical Information Dissemination and Public Relations Division
- Armine Martikyan, Statistical Information Dissemination and Public Relations Division
- Anush Sargsyan, Statistical Information Dissemination and Public Relations Division

External stakeholders:

- G. Levonyan, Department of State Property Management by the Government of the RA
- A. Galstyan, Ministry of Transport and Communication of the RA
- H. Gabrielyan, Ministry of Energy and Nature Protection of the RA
- Shushan Gyarzoian, Ministry of Diaspora of the RA
- Elena Ghazaryan, “Professional Orientation Methodic Center” SNPO
- Artur Petrosyan, Ministry of Agriculture of the RA
- L. Safaryan, General Department of Civil Aviation of the RA
- Armenuhi Mkoyan, Ministry of Emergency Situations of the RA
- Marine Petrosyan, Ministry of Emergency Situations of the RA
- Hovsep Harutyunyan, Ministry of Transport and Communication of the RA
- V. Karapetyan, Ministry of Transport and Communication of the RA
- Arayik Tarverdyan, Ministry of Defense of the RA
- Tpnetsyan, State Nuclear Safety Regulatory Committee by the Government of the RA
- Alik Sargsyan, Ministry of Economy, PAO
- H. Tadevosyan, State Employment Agency
- A. Khachatryan, Ministry of Education and Science of Armenia - State Committee of Science
- Anna Margaryan, State Committee of Water Economy of the RA
- Gayane Avetisyan, Ministry of Finance of the RA
- Tigran Arshakyan, State Committee of Water Economy of the RA
- Armen Kocharyan, Ministry of Urban Development of the RA
- Ruzanna Ghlechyian, Ministry of Diaspora of the RA
- A. Abovyan, RA Police
- Avag Avanesyan, Ministry of International Economic Integration and Reforms of the RA
- Rashid Galstyan, Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of the RA
- Angela Arakelyan, Public Services Regulatory Commission of the RA
- Gevorg Grigoryan, Public Services Regulatory Commission of the RA
- Anna Petrosyan, Ministry of Economy of the RA

- Armine Martirosyan, Central Bank of Armenia
- Gayane Muradyan, National Institute of Health of the RA
- Vahan Bakhshetsyan, TAM Migration State Service

- Susan Benneye, National University of Architecture and Construction of Armenia
- Rafik Grigoryan, Yerevan State University
- Lusine Aghajanyan, Armenian State University of Economics
- Astghik Manukyan, Armenian State University of Economics
- Ani Samsonyan, Armenian State University of Economics
- N. Hovhannisyan, Armenian National Agrarian University
- H. Khachatryan, Armenian National Agrarian University
- A. Tadevosyan, National Polytechnic University of Armenia
- G. Qeshilyan, Armenian National Agrarian University
- Ts. Akopyan, Yerevan State University of Languages and Social Sciences after Brusov
- T. Gnuni, Scientific Research Institute of Energy
- Anna Hakobyan, Armenian State Pedagogical University
- A. Khachatryan, Ministry of Education and Science of Armenia - State Committee of Science
- Avetis Gevorgyan, State Management Academy of the RA
- A. Mirzoyan, National Academy of Sciences of Armenia
- A. Tadevosyan, Yerevan State Medical University after Mkhitar Heratsi

RTA Team:

- Peter Bohnstedt Anan Hansen, Resident Twinning Adviser
- Sona Mirzoyan, RTA Assistant
- Anush Poghosyan, RTA Language Assistant

Annex 4: List of questions asked at the user meetings

1. What official statistics do you use and what sources do you use?
2. In what ways/methods do you receive statistical information (mail, e-mail, web, library, telephone, meetings) and which preferable method fully meets your needs?
3. Last time when did you need statistical data?
4. Are you familiar with the methodology/documentation of official statistics?
5. What sources do you use (www.armstat.am , www.armstatbank.am , www.armDevinfo.am , press releases, data bases etc.)?
6. Are you aware of the Release Calendar of Statistical Indicators?
7. Are you informed that there exists the Calendar of Statistical Publications according to which the timetable of publications is announced in advance?
8. In your opinion, is official statistics published according to the announced timetable?
9. In case of errors in published statistics, do you feel informed about the error?
10. Do you have trust in published statistics and what opinion do you have about the other sources?
11. Do you use NSSRA press releases, statistical glossary, open library, electronic list of the library?
12. Are you aware of the revision policy on statistical indicators?
13. Which way of communication do you prefer with the NSSRA?
14. Are you pleased with the search system in the NSSRA webpage? Do you find what you are searching?
15. Do you use other searching tools such as Google, Yahoo, Yandex?
16. Where should Armstat improve to fulfill your needs?
17. What's your opinion, if there is a need to organize such meetings, seminars, trainings and workshops in NSSRA often?
18. Are you informed that the NSSRA produces statistics but cannot provide individual data?
19. Do you use the web-pages of other organizations (RA Central Bank, European Union, World Bank...)?
20. Is NSSRA open and transparent in your every-day work?
21. Do you think you can get the information you need through a telephone call?

Annex 5. Template for cooperation with users

TEMPLATE: User involvement and user feed back

The NSSRA strategy points out a focus on users and use: *Useful are the statistics which are used. Statistical data are not published for archive. If statistics are not a tool for decision making and do not contribute to the relevant perception of socio-economic phenomena by authorities and public, they do not fulfil their main objective.*

Ways to obtain user feed back:

Focus group interviews:

- Why
- How (Face to face) size 8-15
- Frequence

:Specific user groups (according to the split in user groups NSSR finds relevant) are invited to a working group where users are invited to respond to questions raised and to interact with each other. The output from focus group meetings should give the NSSRA a better understanding of the needs and the ways the respective groups work with statistics. As a result NSSRA should be better in fulfilling their needs.

Usersatisfaction surveys

- Why
- How (web survey) 1000+
- Frequence (every second year??)

General survey of all users. Be clear on the “why” . What are the activities that should take place following the results?

Usability tests

- Why
- How (“Think aloud”, Usertesting.com)size 3-5
- Frequence (when important changes take place??)

Testing the functionality or design of the web site,

Design some tasks that are essential for manouvering on the web site, observe where users have difficulties or even fail completely.

Information meetings and user training

- Why

- How (instruction, ppt and on-line (hands on if possible??) exercises) size 30
- Frequency (ad hoc)

A subject is presented from the content side e.g Labour Market statistics. How to understand the indicators and the methodology. How to interpret the figures.

Armstatbank is introduced . advantages using Armstatbank (selecting exactly what is needed, calculation , re-arrange figures and download directly. Examples, hands-on exercises if possible.

User committees

- Why
- How (physical meetings in NSSRA)
- Frequency: Regular meetings (quarterly??) size 10-15

User committees for all major statistical areas. Participants are representative users for the respective topics plus the responsible statistical staff.

It works like a two-way inspiration for the development of the statistical area as well as the way it is made accessible to users

Webanalytics, e.g Google analytics or logfiles.

- Why
- How (cooperation between IT and dissemination. Dissemination defines the needed reports)
- Frequency (continuously)

Web analytics can tell you how users behave on your site, where do they land, how long do they stay, which 3 clicks take them around. Results from report to be presented to the management quarterly(?)

Annex 6. Template for user focus groups meetings

NSSRA-Statistics Denmark

Project: Enhanced communication through active user involvement

Time:

Location: NSSRA, Yerevan

“Script” for focus group workshops – for internal use only

Time	Agenda	Method	Result
9:00 AM	<p>Welcome, framework and expectations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome by Mr Mnatsakanyan: • Appreciation of participants’ devotion of time • The purpose is to cover the <i>users’ needs</i> for access to statistics in order to determine <i>when</i> and <i>how</i> NSSRA can enhance communication, products and services • The participants are chosen among NSSRA’s primary group of users – therefore the contributions have significant importance for NSSRA’s priorities of future efforts • External facilitation of workshops in order to ensure independence and an “arm’s length” • NSSRA presentation of the Dissemination (Narine) <p>Review of the programme, working approach and expectations of results of the day – by “External” (A “neutral” person e.g. Anahit Sufyan?):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose with and expectations of results during the morning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What are the users’ needs for efficient communication? ○ How do NSSRA’s current (and planned) communication channels, products and services match those 	<p>Introduction in plenum</p> <p>PowerPoint</p> <p>Introduction in plenum + PowerPoint</p>	

	<p>search types and user experiences.</p>		
<p>10:00</p>	<p>What are the present possibilities?</p> <p>A review of current products and services will be presented by the “External” on basis of a document prepared by NSSRA, and an assessment of knowledge and use will take place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which products/services are known? • Which products/services have been used? • Is there compliance between needs and actual use? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why/why not? • Which products/services do we need? • Which products/services are not used? <p>A match between needs and current products will be summarised, and it will be concluded where consistency and “gaps” between demand and supply, exist.</p>	<p>PowerPoint and possible marking of knowledge and use on blackboard</p> <p>Discussion and summary on flip-over sheets – possible trough matrix</p>	<p>A common picture of current match between needs and services</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Orientation about the further procedure• Invitation to joint lunch		the NSSRA dissemination and communication
--	---	--	---