



TWINNING CONTRACT

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Support to the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics in Improving the Quality of Official Statistics

MISSION REPORT

on

Component A

Quality Management of Official Statistics

Activity A.1

Vision, mission, policy and strategy for quality

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List of Abbreviations

BC	Beneficiary country
CoP	European Statistics Code of Practice
DDI	The Data Documentation Initiative
EFQM	European Foundation for Quality Management
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
EU	European Union
GAMSO	Generic Activity Model for Statistical Organisations
GSBPM	The Generic Statistical Business Process Model
ICBS	Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics
MS	Member State (of the EU)
NSS	National statistical system
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
QAF	Quality Assurance Framework of the European Statistical System
SIMS	Single Integrated Metadata Structure
ToR	Terms of Reference

1. General comments

This mission report was prepared as part of the Twinning Project "Support to the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics (ICBS) in Enhancing the Quality of Official Statistics". This was the first mission devoted to vision, mission, policy and strategy for quality within Component A: Quality Management of Official Statistics.

The main activities of the mission were:

- *Presentation of the current situation in ICBS and in the NSS, presentation of EU experience in different member states with different challenges presented by the structure of statistical production in the NSS.*
- *Briefing the MS on status and visions for Quality Management of Official Statistics at ICBS and at the NSS.*
- *Presentation by the MS experts on present Quality Management of Official Statistics in an International perspective*
- *A workshop for BC and MS with external stakeholders*

The position analysis assisted the ICBS and the Twinning Project experts in getting an overview of the present situation regarding Quality Management of Official Statistics in Israel.

MS experts presented the background and the strategy behind Quality Management of Official Statistics in an International perspective.

The position analysis thus established the current state of play regarding Quality Management of Official Statistics in an International perspective as well as in Israel. Furthermore, the position analysis contrasted the current situation with European best practices and thereby formed the basis for discussing a long-term plan for Quality Management of Official Statistics in Israel in an International perspective.

Meeting with external stakeholders created an opportunity for the partners of the National Statistical System (NSS) to learn about their role in the Twinning Project, the need for systematic quality work in order to maintain and enhance trust, and the ways in which cooperation within the NSS could and should be enhanced.

The experts would like to express their thanks to all officials and individuals met for their kind support and for the valuable information they provided, which highly facilitated the experts' work.

The views and observations stated in this report are those of the consultants and do not necessarily represent the views of EU, ICBS or Statistics Denmark.

2. Assessment and results

All of the foreseen activities were carried out following the plans in the ToR; cf. *Terms of Reference (Annex A1 - 1)*. Outcomes were favorable, and results and conclusions are described in the following section.

ICBS presented the current status of Quality Management of Official Statistics. The presentations included:

- *Previous Twinning Work on Quality and the Larger Context of Modernization (Annex A1 - 5)*
- *The Roles of the Methodology Department in Quality Assurance and Documentation (Annex A1 - 6)*
- *Promoting Coordination and Quality in the NSS (Annex A1 - 7)*
- *Harmonization, Standardization and Mapping of processes and activities in ICBS (Annex A1 - 8)*
- *Variables and Dictionaries Management System (Annex A1 - 9)*
- *Metadata in the ICBS (Annex A1 - 10)*
- *The ICBS Meta Data Program: Update and Quality Aspects (Annex A1 - 11)*
- *Quality and Excellence in the ICBS (Annex A1 - 12)*
- *The Role of National Statistics in Israel, Core Statistics and Official Statistics, the National Background (Annex A1 - 16)*

The MS experts gave presentations on:

- *Overview of Quality Management of Official Statistics- Benefits and Requirements (Annex A1 - 13)*
- *Quality Assurance Framework - Self-Assessment GAMSQ (Annex A1 - 14)*
- *Practical Implementation and workflow for quality management (Annex A1 - 15)*

2.1. Current situation at ICBS assessed

Official statistics in Israel is mainly produced by ICBS, but also by Ministries and national institutions that form together the NSS.

2.1.1 Coordination with NSS

In order to engage in modernization of the production processes of official statistics ICBS aim to develop an infrastructures with its partners in the NSS. ICBS is willing to foster quality management and assessment of official statistics in Israel, both in ICBS and in the NSS.

However, since statistics is not core business of other institutions than ICBS they often lack the power to engage their top management in investing resources in statistical development.

2.1.2 Coordination within ICBS

A metadata steering committee and a metadata implementation committee, with a coordinator and advisor in the Statistician Department have been established at ICBS as well as a new unit in the Statistician Department dedicated to train and implement quality of official statistics within ICBS as well as the NSS.

2.1.3 Quality of official statistics

Statistics Code of Practice for was formally adopted by ICBS top management in 2014 and in March 2016 the principle of Statistics Code of Practice for the European Neighbourhood South countries was translated to Hebrew and the principles, implications and benefits were presented to all ICBS managers at a big event.

Within the last years the following significant actions related to quality management of official Statistics have taken place at ICBS:

- SIMS application developed and pilot performed
- Catalogue of questions in major family surveys produced
- Glossary of concepts made available on-line
- Web pages for statistical topics and Thesaurus under development (for a new website that is expected to be released within the next couple of months)
- Catalogue of code lists for programmers produced
- Catalogue of variables for programmers produced
- Metadata with SDMX data sent to international organizations
- Introductory sections in publication and in Annual Abstract produced
- Metadata for IMF and other international organizations produced
- Mapping of administrative files, application for legal authorizations initiated
- Ad hoc methodological documents, issued by subject matter units and Methodology Department produced.

3. Conclusions and recommendations

3.1. General observations

The activities on quality in ICBS have been ongoing since the last twinning, and the participating staff is highly engaged. There is an increase in work quality, and progress is being made in many areas. Great plans are in place.

There is a tendency for subject matter domains to be like islands, each working in their own way and thus, are little inclined to follow overall institutional standards.

Recommendation:

- ICBS needs to work more with culture of work and attitudes to standardized processes and products.

3.2. Corporate Strategy

The Corporate Strategy has not quite come across the table. It is not widely known in the organization.

Recommendation:

- The strategy should be marketed more vigorously.

3.3. Quality

Quality framework and Code of Practice (CoP) have been adopted in the modified ENP version.

Please consult Annex A1 - 21 and A1 - 22 or:

[http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/4472553/6753624/Statistics+Code+of+Practice+for+the+European+Neighbourhood+South+countries+\(Based+on+the+ESCoP\)/bd1d86c0-445d-4aca-93e9-990ff6294a93](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/4472553/6753624/Statistics+Code+of+Practice+for+the+European+Neighbourhood+South+countries+(Based+on+the+ESCoP)/bd1d86c0-445d-4aca-93e9-990ff6294a93)

As part of the government sector and the work with European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) there is a steering committee planned but this has not yet been integrated with quality issues connected to the statistics production.

Quality principles should be used to set guidelines for the business processes that are involved in solving the tasks of ICBS and creating its products such as e.g. The Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM). It would be useful to agree on a model of these business processes, so everyone would speak the same language.

Recommendation:

- The steering committee should be integrated with the quality work in the production of statistics.
- The internationally agreed standard for describing and structuring statistical business processes, GSBPM, should be considered for the process of planning a new survey and defining quality requirements for processes.
- The work with EFQM must be integrated with CoP, QAF (Quality Assurance Framework of the European Statistical System).

For further information on QAF please consult:

http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/64157/4392716/qaf_2012-en.pdf/8bcff303-68da-43d9-aa7d-325a5bf7fb42

3.4. Coordination within ICBS

It is necessary to ensure coordination of statistics within the ICBS before harmonizing others and committing them to quality standards. There seems to be good progress in harmonization. One achievement that was presented was the glossary, please consult: http://www.cbs.gov.il/reader/Milon/Milon_E.html?OnlyFinal=1. Work has started on harmonizing questions in different surveys, but it seemed this was not easy to implement.

Recommendations:

- ICBS should ensure that the glossary complies with international standards and definitions.
- Use of the standard questions should be promoted
- ICBS should make a plan for the further internal coordination

3.5. Coordination of NSS

Great work on coordination has already been done. Thus ICBS has set up a good plan for enhancing cooperation with other producers, and we saw already the signing of the agreement with the Insurance Institute while we were there. Also involving the Public Council was on its way.

The report from the Comptroller General pointed out needs for more coordination, which is a good starting point. Among the problems identified in the report were duplication of work and data, incompatible statistics, and stakeholders who don't consult ICBS as required by the Ordinance. It was noted that according to the Ordinance, institutions must accept and seek guidance from ICBS.

The plan for future development of coordination is excellent and should be pursued.

Recommendations:

- Work on generating incentives for Other National Authorities (ONA) should be planned.
- ICBS should try to map reporting to international organizations (who/what).
- A discussion on quality labeling should be introduced in ICBS, and subsequently in the NSS and in the Public Council.
- Make a detailed plan for the work with coordination of NSS.

3.6. Integrated Metadata System

Great progress has been made in integrating metadata. Single Integrated Metadata Structure (SIMS) has been adopted as a standard for reference metadata content and pilots have been carried out.

Recommendations:

- Keep it up!
- The Data Documentation Initiative (DDI) should be considered as a technical standard for metadata storing and integration. Please consult:
<http://www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/metis/Data+Documentation+Initiative+-+DDI>
- ICBS should choose a standard system for implementing DDI.