



Newsletter 2023

International Consulting News

Contents

Introduction.....	3
EU Twinning Project in Azerbaijan 2020 – 2022	4
Cooperation with Western Balkan countries and Türkiye.....	7
Statistical cooperation with EU’s neighbours.....	10
Cooperation with African partners.....	11
Trainer’s point of view	14
The International Statistical Literacy Project.....	16
Statistics Finland’s organisational contact details	18

Introduction

Statistics Finland is an active member of the international statistical community. It is committed to complying with international codes of conduct, quality criteria and recommendations for the development, production and dissemination of statistics. Statistics Finland also takes part in knowledge-sharing in different domains and supports statistical capacity development in partner countries. This newsletter contains selection from our activities in recent years.

Highlights 2019 – 2022

- Leading the EU Twinning Project “Support to the State Statistical Committee and the State Tax Service under the Ministry of Economy to strengthen collection, harmonization, analysis, publishing and dissemination of business statistics” in Azerbaijan from 2020 to 2022.
- Participation in the EU twinning projects from 2018 to 2020 and from 2021 to 2023 to support the reform of the statistics system in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- Implementing the IPA (Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance) 2019 Multi-beneficiary Statistical Cooperation Programme by providing expertise in statistical projects from 2021 to 2023 above all on price statistics – HICP, environmental accounts and forestry and with Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey as partner countries.
- A member of the consortiums in ECOBUSAF and SOCSTAF projects running from 2022 to 2025 and taking place in frame of the Pan-African Statistics (PAS) II Programme to support the capacity-development of selected national statistical offices of the African Statistical System (ASS).
- In total, contributing to many technical assistance and cooperation activities in the field of official statistics: In 2019 participation in 10, 2020 in 9, 2021 in 9 and 2022 in 15 projects.



EU Twinning Project in Azerbaijan 2020 – 2022

Statistics Finland acted as Lead Consortium member in a 21-month Twinning Project aiming to strengthen the statistical business registers and to align the business statistics methodology with EU standards and business statistics oriented on future data requirements. Their common objective was to improve the possibilities for growth of the SME sector in Azerbaijan.

The project started in June 2020 amidst the Covid-19 outbreak, and due to travel restrictions all activities were carried out remotely for the first 15 months of the project. The final eight months of the project were mostly carried out on-site unless travel restrictions forced remote and hybrid participation.

The project consortium

The project consortium consisted of four Member State National Statistical Institutes (NSI's): Statistics Finland as well as Statistics Lithuania and Statistics Netherlands as Junior Partners in the consortium and Statistics Denmark as implementing partner. The Finnish Institute of Public Management Ltd (HAUS) also participated by providing expertise. A large pool of experts thus carried out project activities with extensive experience in international consultancy.

Multiple Beneficiary Country Entities

The project had not one but three beneficiary country entities (The State Statistical Committee, The State Tax Service under the Ministry of Economy, and the SME-Agency). It assisted in improving the Administrative Data quality between the State Tax Service (STS) and the State Statistical Committee (SSC) and in the upgrading of the production of business statistics with a focus on Small to Medium size Enterprises (SME). It also provided training to these entities on statistical design, analysis, reporting and dissemination.



The RTA-team debriefing session after the Technical Visibility Event held at the State Tax Service in Baku in September 2021.

The Resident Twinning Advisor (RTA)

Each Twinning Project has a Member State (MS) expert on-site for the duration of the project to coordinate the daily functions of the project and the projects activities between the Member State and the Beneficiary Country (BC). In September 2021, RTA Ville-Matti Pilviö, Statistics Finland expert, was finally able to travel to Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, and take up duties. He appreciated finally meeting colleagues on-site after such a long time working remotely.



Twinning project Final Event took place in Baku in April 2022.

Key working methodologies

Three main methods were used in the project: Interactive consultations (either remotely or on-site), training activities and study visits. The consultations consisted of lectures, workshops, and hands-on work between the member state experts and their counterparts. Training sessions were tailored to pre-assessed needs of the beneficiary entities, showcasing best practices and EU requirements on numerous topics. These were further enhanced by study visits to member state NSI's where participants had the opportunity to further their knowledge of the substance areas.

Results achieved by project component

The Twinning project contributed towards increasing capacity among local operators to collect, process, harmonize, analyze, publish, and disseminate business statistics measuring the performance of the private sector/SMEs in Azerbaijan.

The first component aimed to improve and expand the transfer of administrative data between the Tax Authority and the Statistical Office in Azerbaijan. The second component focused on developing the production process of business statistics, with an emphasis on SME statistics. The third component was a training component aimed to improve the capacity of the experts of the three beneficiary country entities.

Further information on the project can be found on the project's web page www.stat.fi/aztwinning/



Cooperation with Western Balkan countries and Türkiye

From 2018 to 2020 Statistics Finland participated in the EU twinning project "Support to the reform of the statistics system in Bosnia and Herzegovina" led by Statistics Denmark. It provided expertise in the areas of using administrative data for producing structural business statistics, services producer price index, statistical business register as well as balance of



Study visit from the Central Bank of Bosnia and Herzegovina at Statistics Finland in EU twinning project in October 2022

payment and IIP (international investment position) statistics. Currently, Statistics Finland participates as Junior Member State in the EU twinning project "Further Support to the reform of the statistics system in Bosnia and Herzegovina" led by Statistics Denmark which started in March 2021. Statistics Finland experts act as Component Leaders regarding administrative data sources and balance of payments statistics.

As a member of the consortium Statistics Finland participates in the IPA (Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance) 2019 Multi-beneficiary Statistical Cooperation Programme, with Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Türkiye as partner countries. In 2021-2022 it has provided expertise in statistical projects on price statistics – HICP and environmental accounts and forestry as well as contributed in the fields of social and business statistics and communication.

A virtual TAIEX expert mission on sample design in social statistics was conducted in 2022 to support the Statistical Office of Montenegro.

Statistics Finland provided technical assistance in “New Era for Statistics Programme” in environmental accounts in 2020 through on-site consultancy in Ankara, as well as virtually. A study visit of the TurkStat staff members took place in Statistics Finland premises in November 2019. The experts exchanged views on designing and developing a national metadata system and implementation of meta data standards. Furthermore, TurkStat International Cooperation Department visited Statistics Finland in 2022 with the focus on project monitoring and evaluation.



A delegation of the Turkish Ministry of Justice paid a working visit on judicial statistics to Statistics Finland in May 2022.



Social statistics experts of the Kosovo Statistical Office (KAS) on a study visit to Statistics Finland in October 2022 .

Statistical cooperation with EU's neighbours

Statistics Finland took part in the EU Twinning Project “Strengthening the capacity of the Georgian Statistical System” on the activities on Short Term Business Statistics Indicators in 2020 – 2021. The project was led by Statistics Denmark.

In 2020-2021 an expert from Statistics Finland conducted on-line missions on sampling methodologies of time-use survey to Armenia in frame of the EU's STEP (Statistics Through Eastern Partnership) programme.

Moreover, from 2020 to 2021 Statistics Finland took part in sector review of education statistics for Moldova.

In 2020, an expert from Statistics Finland took part in TAEX seminar on statistical governance held in Tunis. TAEX Expert Online Mission on EFQM model was organised in co-operation with the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) in 2020.

Statistics Finland is an implementing partner in the ongoing two-year EU Twinning Project on statistics in Jordan, led by Statistics Denmark. The project started in September 2022 and Statistics Finland is contributing in the field of use of administrative data and survey methodology.





Cooperation with African partners

Virtual training on the consumer price index for East African countries

Statistics Finland's experts carried out training on the use of scanner data in the preparation of consumer price indices in May-June 2021. This was done in cooperation with the African program team of the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data Network. .

The training consisted of five separate sessions organized remotely. They consisted of lectures, reflection tasks and expert discussions. Experts from the statistical authorities of Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar and Mauritius participated in the training.

Some of the participating countries were already well into the implementation of scanner data and were planning pilot data collections. In addition to the training, Statistics Finland shared with the participants methodological reports made at Statistics Finland and material of the EU-funded research project on the development of consumer price index data acquisition. The participants found the organized training useful.



Veli-Matti Jantunen from Statistics Finland discussing PX publication tables with INSTAT experts in June 2022.

Statistics Finland contributing to Swedish development cooperation projects in Africa

Statistics Finland experts conducted an online PX Web Workshop in 2020 as part of the SCB cooperation project in Somalia in frame of the cooperation agreement on international development work.

During 2022, Statistics Finland's experts participated in the implementation of Sweden's long-term technical assistance statistical cooperation project in Mali within the framework of the cooperation agreement between Statistics Finland and the Statistics Sweden (SCB). Two missions were carried out remotely and one was held on-site in Bamako, Mali. The statistical cooperation project aims at supporting the development of a free web-based table dissemination system for statistical producers and set up the Mali Statistics Office's PxWeb dissemination server. In the third mission, the dissemination platform was extended to the Bambara language.



Implementing Pan-African Statistics (PAS II) Programme

Statistics Finland is a member of the consortiums in two projects taking place in frame of the Pan-African Statistics (PAS II) Programme to support the capacity-development of selected national statistical offices of the African Statistical System (ASS). The overall objective of the ECOBUSAF project is to strengthen the African statistical system and to ensure the quality of data used in monitoring societal progress in order to support policymaking in these countries. In SOCSTAF project technical support and training to African national statistical offices (NSOs) is provided in the area of social statistics based on European expertise on demand-driven basis.

Both ECOBUSAF and SOCSTAF projects started in February 2022 with an inception phase and will be running until October 2025. PAS II Programme is funded by the European Union.





Trainer's point of view by ESTP Lecturer Katri Soinne

What was the course about?

We had two different courses on National Accounts in 2022: a 4-day online introductory course in May and an 8-day in-house advanced course in November. Both courses gave a picture of the statistical framework called the System of National Accounts (SNA), however, some more topics were introduced in the advanced course and the level of detail was greater. Most of the lecturers were from Statistics Finland, but we had a colleague from CBS (Netherlands) to talk about supply and use tables in both courses, and colleagues from INE (Spain) to talk about basic concepts in the introductory course and about quarterly and regional accounts in the advanced course.

Who was there?

We had a total of 26 participants from 17 different organizations, representing 16 different countries for the introductory course. For the advanced course we had 22 participants from 19 different organizations, representing 19 different countries.

What do you think are the main differences between physical workshops and online ones?

I have always said that there are two equally important goals with these courses – the first is to get a picture of the system and the second is to connect with colleagues. With the online course the second goal is very challenging.

During our earlier in-house courses, we have had some social events, like the get-together party after the first course day and later during the week the famous “sauna & snacks evening”. For the online course we had a short “social event” after the first training day, we offered some videos from Finland

in the mornings and some pieces of music and stand-up comedy during the course days. During in-house courses participants have a chance to talk and learn from each other during coffee and lunch breaks. During online courses people might be in different time zones, which is challenging for organizing a schedule for training days and breaks.

A big difference between in-house and online courses is also the interaction with participants. If the lecturer sees the participants, it is easier to realize whether they can understand or if they are lost, and it is easier for participants to ask questions.

What did you learn?

Good planning is essential, whether the course is in-house or online. The ability to use technology is even more important with online courses. It is important to make things as easy as possible for the participants.

Activating the course participants needs more effort within online courses, but there are some possibilities. For example, working in smaller groups in breakout rooms worked just fine, if the groups were aware of their task.

ESTP courses are organized as in-house courses again, but there has been some interest for online courses in the future. Good practices, which we shall definitely keep for possible online courses in the future, include timing (a short break once an hour, two longer breaks during the day, if people are in different time zones), timer for breaks, using breakout rooms for exercises, sharing some music, stand-up comedy, and videos during the course days, as well as offering a package of “tasty greetings” with some Finnish chocolate and salted liquorice.



The International Statistical Literacy Project

The ISLP Project reaches all continents

The International Statistical Literacy Project (ISLP)–founded in 1994–promotes statistical literacy worldwide, especially among youth and in developing countries. The ISLP is under the umbrella of the International Association for Statistical Education (IASE), the education section of the International Statistical Institute (ISI). Nowadays, the project’s main objective is to promote statistical literacy across the world, among the young and adults, in all walks of life.

The ISLP Project has a reach in all continents and currently has 162 country coordinators. The project collaborates with different parties, e.g. societies, universities, research institutions, national statistical offices and educational institutions.

Even traditional literacy, not to mention statistical literacy, is a major challenge in many countries. This issue is exacerbated by the barrage of false information and fake news that is distributed through digital networks. At the same time, the youth are the builders of the future. If they have the know-how to disseminate and evaluate information, they will have an important role to play in the development of their countries. The ISLP project wants to be a part of this positive change.

In recent years, the project has expanded to cover more areas than collaboration with educational institutions. Some examples of our work are organizing webinars about different topics, collecting resources about statistical literacy, and bringing forth different statistical skill requirements for society's needs, such as data science skills.

Modus operandi of the ISLP

The ISLP is managed by a five-strong [executive board](#), as well as a eight-person [steering group](#) appointed by the ISI/IASE. The project is mostly run on a voluntary basis and tries to obtain funding for fixed periods of time.

ISLP can be seen as a hub that interconnects people, ideas, resources, and news in Statistical Literacy. It was built as a network of individuals and institutions behind them, and outreach activities to increase awareness. Finland has been a pioneering country in the promotion of statistical literacy, and both Statistics Finland and the Finnish Statistical Society are key actors in this area.



Reija Helenius from Statistics Finland has been leading the project since 2010. In these 13 years, a worldwide network of country coordinators has been founded, the webpage has been renewed, the International Poster Competition has been started, the ISLP Newsletter has been launched, and statistical literacy has actively been promoted in conference sessions, articles, webinars, and so on. The Best Cooperative Award has also become established.

However, the project also encounters major challenges. Firstly, the project has grown too sizeable to be operated on a voluntary basis. At the same time, country coordinators expect a higher level of activity and support in order to advance statistical literacy in their countries.

Current themes that the project is working on include developing, promoting, and using resources together with UNITAR/GIST, and mapping out statistical literacy activities worldwide. If you are interested in knowing more about the ISLP or joining the project, send a message to [islp.coordination\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:islp.coordination(at)gmail.com).



Statistics Finland's organisational contact details

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