



Evolution of the National Statistical System, ALBANIA

1. Management and Organizational Development

Since January 24, 2006, Mrs. Gerta Picari has been appointed from the government as new Director General of INSTAT.

The statistical system of the Republic of Albania relies on a new and modern Law “On Official Statistics” approved by the Parliament on 5 February 2004. (Law, n.9180).

It attributes to INSTAT the role of an independent institution in charge of producing neutral, timely, relevant and transparent statistics in the full respect of confidentiality. This law is in line with the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and European Standards for legal texts in the field of statistics.

According to the Law “On Official Statistics”, INSTAT is in charge of the preparation of the Program of Official Statistics which covers all statistical areas in compliance with EU recommendations and the *acquis communautaire*. This program is been designed in two parts, Part I shows statistics that would be produced within the framework of existing budget limits and Part II, where extra money is allocated to first of all Business statistics and National Accounts. Important part of the Official Statistical Program is the Strategic plan which includes visions, strategic priorities and strategic goals.

In 28 of December 2006, INSTAT, handed over to the Council of Ministers the 5-year Official Statistical Program 2007-2011 to be approved by the Albanian Parliament.

According to the Law on Official Statistics, a new Statistical Council has come into force with a mandate to act as a steering organ of INSTAT with a very active role in the further statistical development of the institution.

A special agreement on mutual co-operation will be set up between INSTAT and different actors, statistical agencies in the field of Official Statistics. For the moment there are six draft memoranda of understanding that soon will be signed. They cover cooperation between INSTAT and the following actors:

- Ministry of Finance
- Ministry of Labour
- Ministry of Agriculture and Food

- Taxation Agency
- Custom Agency
- Bank of Albania

It is pointed out that the Memorandum of Understanding aims to increase the functioning of official statistics by making visible the most important working arrangements and mutual obligations when implementing the cooperation. It is based on the Law on Official Statistics.

A working group for each field of cooperation will be responsible for the coordination and implementation of the activities.

INSTAT has signed with the General Directory of Taxation the Memoranda of Understanding. It will bring to a more successful collaboration between the institutions and the improvement of the way of transferring data.

In order to improve the agricultural system in Albania, INSTAT is now elaborating the final step to the signature of the Memoranda of Understanding with the Ministry of Agriculture. This step will provide an appropriate framework for the design and carry out the forthcoming of 2008 agricultural census.

The same way has been taken on with the Bank of Albania, aiming in a further successful collaboration with this institution, either for monetary and balance of payments policies.

2. Overall Capacity

The overall statistical capacity of the Albanian statistical system has progressed since 2001. Among visible achievements, can mention the development of a number of classifications that are compatible with international classifications, especially EU classifications; the whole set of data collected in the 2001 population and housing census; the development of new short-term business statistics and the strengthening of structural business surveys; the improvement of money and banking statistics, as well as balance of payments statistics.

The process of transition of INSTAT towards a modern statistical agency which is in line with international standards and is servicing democracy and market economy is supported by different multilateral donors such as World Bank, IMF, EU and several bilateral donors among them SIDA, ISTAT, UNICEF, UNDP, Swiss Agency for Cooperation and Development (SDC).

The 2003 CARDS Regional Program on Statistics, re-started on 14 July 2006 and the inception phase began on 13 October 2006 until 13 March 2008. In the program activities are included 4 Pilot Projects, respectively on: External Trade Statistics, Labour Market Statistics, Migration Statistics and Purchasing Power Parities. In the framework is important to mention the participation of INSTAT specialists at the EUROSTAT Working Groups with very good results.

INSTAT has planned to introduce LFS survey in 2007/2009. This is an important project.

For the first time during 2006, the Government decided to finance from the budget of state the conduction of Labour Force Survey in the framework of reduction of NOE in the country

The regional dimension should be taken into account when the decision on the NUTS classification is taken. CARDS

On October 2006 the World Bank relocated the funds for the HBS 2006. The preparatory phase is been implemented with the technical assistance of Istat, the Italian National Institute of Statistics, which acts within a contract funded by DfID and which is limited to the methodological design of the survey.

Meanwhile has continue the project in common with Statistics Sweden, “Partnership in Statistics Albania”, SIDA 2006-2009. Technical Assistance in the short - long term statistics, the connection with the National Accounts. Very important is the focus on the Metadata.

During 2006, INSTAT has concluded the negotiation phase with the Statistical Office of Switzerland through SDC in Tirana for the implementation in the 2007 of the project in common with INSTAT: “Developing Demographic and Social Statistics”, Swiss – Albanian Statistical Cooperation 2007 – 2009.

INSTAT staff has been working on the improvement and update of the terms for the Regional Statistics project (EU), introduced in the CARDS Regional 2005.

UNICEF – MICS- the responsibility of INSTAT to carry out a survey for the second time and the continuity of the Social Research.

For the first time during 2006, INSTAT is been diverted into an agency offering technical assistance in the framework of CARDS program for the population census in Kosovo.

3. Dissemination Policies

INSTAT is the main disseminator of statistics in Albania. Products disseminated by INSTAT are statistical data, methodological explanations, and analytical comments, in Albanian and English for the vast majority of them. The supports used for dissemination are paper, CD-ROM, and Internet (through INSTAT website). INSTAT is also providing tailored data sets upon request.

In general, publications on paper and CD-ROM are given free of charge to a pre-established list of users: public administrations, media, and students. They are sold to private sector, especially enterprises, but this does not represent a large amount of dissemination.

The website is another type of dissemination, which is free. It is bilingual Albanian – English, and contents several important economic and social statistics. As a participant in the IMF General Data Dissemination System, INSTAT put on its website an advance release calendar for the calendar year.

INSTAT has strengthened the collaboration with the media in regular base, press-releases especially on short term statistics. A spokesperson has been appointed last year for this purpose, and more generally for the strengthening of relations with the media.

One more important achievement has been the publication of the Statistical Yearbook 1995 – 2004 in November 2006, available in CD – ROM as well.

4. Monitoring Quality in All Activities

The monitoring of quality at INSTAT is promoted through various initiatives, following the main dimensions of quality.

The publication of methodological rules followed by statisticians has been generalised.

A special effort has been devoted over the recent years to the translation of the main EU statistical regulations into Albanian.

Timeliness, which is another important dimension of quality, is monitored through the implementation of an advance release calendar that has been established by INSTAT.

The General Data Dissemination System (GDDS) established through the technical assistance of IMF.

The dimension of technical reliability is monitored through cross-check of data consistency before their release by specialists of the statistical areas concerned (for instance, retail trade turnover is compared with foreign trade and prices for products that are not produced in Albania).

At the same time, the European self assessment checklist for survey managers (known as Development of a Self Assessment Programme – DESAP) is being tested by some survey managers of INSTAT.

Important achievement has been the design of the national program for the approximation of the national legislation with the EU legislation.

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