

**BB. Enhancing key statistics and indicators to monitor progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals**

**Department of Economic and Social Affairs in collaboration with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Economic and Social Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Economic Commission for Africa, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and the Economic Commission for Europe (\$810,600)**

**Background**

140. Reliable and timely data are a fundamental tool for development analysis and policy decision-making at the national, regional and global levels. They are needed in a particular form and at specific moments in time in order to be useful for monitoring progress towards development goals and targets at all levels. Two fundamental reasons why a significant gap still exists between the demand for high quality statistics and indicators and the capacity of countries to routinely supply them are: (a) data are not being collected/produced at the country level; and (b) while some basic data are being produced and collected, countries do not have the capacity to disseminate and communicate them in an appropriate form and in a timely fashion to the relevant user groups.
141. While the international community has devoted considerable attention and resources to assisting countries in the collection and production of data, in developing appropriate methodological tools and in agreeing on international “production standards”, relatively little attention has been paid to the challenges countries face in effectively disseminating and communicating data. This imbalance was discussed in the Secretary-General’s report at the thirty-ninth session of the Statistical Commission in 2008 (E/CN.3/2008/12). The report suggested that countries need support in better targeting their various user groups through the formulation of comprehensive “data dissemination strategies”. Furthermore, countries need technical support in using modern communication technologies, especially the Internet, to be able to quickly move their statistical products to the users. The Statistical Commission welcomed this report and explicitly “encouraged the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to continue its initiative to facilitate

the exchange of experience among countries, with respect to dissemination policies and practices” (decision 39/111(f) of the Statistical Commission). This project proposal addresses these issues.

142. The beneficiaries of improved country capacity to disseminate and communicate data will be the broad spectrum of users, comprising the national Governments, regional and international agencies, the development research community and the public at large. In particular, modernizing and standardizing data exchange capabilities of Member States will contribute to improving the availability and timeliness of country data in key international databases (such as the Millennium Development Goal database maintained for global monitoring by the Department for Economic and Social Affairs), which will in turn benefit the United Nations intergovernmental processes charged with monitoring progress.
143. This project will build upon lessons learned from six statistical development account projects already implemented by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Some of the success factors of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs implementation of past development accounts were the focus on a manageable number of countries, and the fact that all country-based activities were always conducted in close cooperation with the national statistical offices, in order to ensure long-term impact and sustainability.

**Objective of the Organization:** To improve accessibility by the users, especially policy decision makers and researchers, of timely and reliable statistics which are policy relevant and meet the increasing demand for high quality information at the national, regional and international levels.

**Relationship to the strategic framework for the period 2010-2011 and the Millennium Development Goals:** The Department of Economic and Social Affairs subprogramme 5 (Statistics); ECA subprogramme 9 (Statistics); ESCAP subprogramme 7 (Statistics); ECE subprogramme 3 (Statistics); ECLAC subprogramme 10 (Statistics and economic projections); ESCWA subprogramme 5 (Statistics for evidence-based policymaking); Millennium Development Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8.

**Summary budget**

(Thousands of United States dollars)

General temporary assistance	42.0
Consultants	98.0
Travel	142.0
Contractual services	43.6
Operating expenses	11.0
Equipment	50.0
Study tours	50.0
Workshops	<u>374.0</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>810.6</b>

**Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat**

**Indicators of achievement**

(a) Improved accessibility of national data and metadata by strengthening the dissemination capability and practices at the country level

(a) Increased number of countries that can offer interactive data access capabilities on the websites of their national statistical offices

(b) Improved accessibility of national and the United Nations system data by enhancing the content and the functionality of the data portal, as a key vehicle to facilitate effective international data flow

(b) Increased volume of official statistical data at the international level provided through the United Nations data, which can be used for tracking progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and internationally agreed development goals

**Main activities**

144. The main activities of the project will include:

- (a) Developing training material through a desk study on best practices in data dissemination and communication;
- (b) Conducting an expert group meeting to review and validate the training material on best practices in data dissemination and communication;
- (c) Organizing, in close cooperation with the regional commissions, five regional training workshops for staff of national statistical offices to improve the technical capabilities of their countries to disseminate and communicate statistics and indicators. The workshops will cover topics such as: improving producer-user relationships; developing online communication of statistics; providing access to microdata; developing modern data visualization tools;
- (d) Developing, in close cooperation with the respective national statistical offices of five selected countries, a prototype of a national database of key indicators and statistics, especially the Millennium Development Goals and the internationally agreed development goals, to be disseminated via the websites of the national statistical offices and linked to the United Nations data portal;
- (e) Providing direct technical assistance to countries to support the development of appropriate data dissemination platforms;
- (f) Organizing study tours to draw on the strengths and achievements of more advanced countries and to create opportunities for staff from statistically less developed countries to learn best practices and to share experience with other countries.