

# Country experiences in capacity development during COVID-19

## Finland

**EGES 2020 Session Four: Capacity Development in  
Environment Statistics and Climate Change Statistics**

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**Economic statistics  
Energy, environment and greenhouse gases**

# Introduction to capacity development

According to rather fresh work by PARIS21\*,

Guidelines for Developing Statistical Capacity,  
A Roadmap for Capacity Development 4.0:

‘Statistical activities are no longer produced exclusively by designated official statistics organizations.

National statistical systems (NSSs) need to adapt to these radical changes in the world of statistics and data.

To do so, NSSs systems need to be strengthened on three levels:’

\*Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century, January 2020

## 1. SYSTEM

National Statistical Offices (NSOs) need to co-operate more than before:

with other government organizations, e.g. statistical departments of line ministries or planning agencies,

as well as with private sector data providers and civil society organizations.

## 2. ORGANIZATION

Crucial for producing high-quality data:

Strategic planning, co-ordination, monitoring and evaluation inside the NSO, as well as well targeted human resource management and transparent statistical production processes.

## 3. INDIVIDUAL

Next to training staff in the quantitative skills needed for data production, analysis and dissemination, NSSs should also aim to build communication, negotiation and leadership skills.

# What is statistical capacity development? By Statistics Sweden:

- The process by which partners' ability to develop, produce and disseminate high-quality statistics is strengthened
- A planned and strategic transfer of knowledge, methods and approaches.
- A basic principle is to always work side by side with colleagues in the partner countries (peer to peer)

# Finland as capacity developer

- Of all Twinning projects (between EU and client countries) in 2015 – 2020 five percent on environment and six percent on agriculture, forestry and fisheries.
- Of Twinning projects implemented by Finland 11 % on environment.
- Of projects implemented by Finland as lead 14 % on environment.
- Also projects financed and run e.g. by World Bank.
- Environmental accounts is the 'core' area of Statistics Finland, but strongly related to environmental statistics.

# An example: A brief history of one project influenced by the Covid

- The project started on 13th January 2020
- First activities implemented in the beginning of March
- The first two positive Covid-19 cases were found on 8th March
- In the client country the lockdown begun on 9<sup>th</sup> March step by step
- RTA Resident Twinning Adviser (RTA) returned home country on 16<sup>th</sup> March
- The project was suspended for 2 months
- A revised work plan prepared in April
- The project restarted on 11th May
- Investing in the necessary equipment and delivering them to the client country
- RTA came back to the client country on 2nd November
- At the moment we are implementing the project remotely

# An example: Strengthening the Capacities and Efficiency in the client country, tools and activities



- **STE Short Term Expert (STE) missions > Remote work**
- **Online / e-learning > Will be used later**
- **Study visits > Postponed**
- **Round-table discussions > Currently not in use**
- **Analyses, evaluations, benchmarking and recommendations > Remote work**
- **Peer-to-peer advice and discussions > Online**
- **Working groups > Online**
- **Trainings > Online**

# tools and activities, cont.

- **Workshops > Online**
- **Conferences (academic) > Will be held later**
- **High-level conferences > Will be held later**
- **Steering committee meetings > Online**
- **Stakeholder meetings > Online**
- **Working groups > Online**
- **Trainings > Online**



# How to do it now

- Remote work continues
- Follow up-meetings with European Union Delegation (EUD) every 3 weeks
- Mission weeks can be done over the longer period of time
- STEs have a working diary

# What is important

- Keep in regular contact with the project office and the team  
Team spirit! > Morning meetings, WhatsAppgroup and Teams, virtual coffee breaks
- Open communication with EUD > Follow up –meetings every 3 weeks
- RTA must support STEs > Online meetings and face-to-face meetings during the activities, STEs meeting
- The beneficiary organizations must be posted of the progress of the project > Weekly meetings (RTA and RTA counterpart)
- Orientation to use online tools > Training

# An other example

- Project started 1.3.2019, three months suspension 1.5.-31.7.2020. New closing day will be 31.5.2021.
- All activities are online until the end of January 2021. RTA is still waiting to return to the client country.
- Assistants are working online and in the project office located in the ministry.
- The real duration of a suspension is not as it is written, it is actually more.
- Currently online trainings are proceeded pretty well after some technical difficulties –Zoom with simultaneous interpretation is needed.
- A big challenge is to maintain the good mood with the client country and STE's –trust of the project.
- Updating project results.

# Capacity development during the pandemic: Experiences and reflections from Statistics Sweden

## How we (normally) do it

- Long-term advisor or STE: drive change processes, plan and implement CD activities and ensure continuous reflection and learning
- Short-term advisors: short-term missions, study/work visits, remote advising

## What we have done during the pandemic

- Digital short-term missions
- Digital workshops
- Webinar
- Films

# Capacity development during the pandemic: Experiences and reflections from Statistics Sweden

## Reflections

- To not meet physically inhibits the iterative process, hard to be creative.
- Risk of one-way communication, inactivity
- Established partnerships facilitates a lot
- Preparations very essential
- Important to have clear rules and functions
- More important to follow up the effect of digital CD

# Capacity development during the pandemic: Experiences and reflections from Statistics Sweden

## Conclusions

- You must have control over the technology and use the right tools
- Don't have too many participants and too long sessions
- Digital CD demands high ownership from partner
- Long-term advisor even more important

## What we take with us into the future

- Invest in sufficient technology for online meetings in all projects
- Use it when suitable, as a complement to physical meetings
- Always consider digital missions as an option

# Now, 2021 and onwards

- No need to cancel any capacity development projects so far.
- Remote work and online activities keep the work going on.
- Less travelling and more remote work and online work will be permanent situation?
- Time and money saved. How to keep this money and time in improvement of capacity development?

# Now, 2021 and onwards

- Pandemics effect to priority setting, but climate change, biodiversity loss and other megaproblems remain.
- Importance of capacity development still increasing in environmental statistics, as well as in their combination with other information and policy uses.
- Development at system, organization and individual level: Regular online contacts, inputs to 'online' technology, face to face online meetings, regular follow up of achievements, diaries etc.
- Learning from other areas in developing environmental statistics and accounts and statistics on natural resources.