

History of official Statistics in Jordan

Introduction:

The Department of Statistics (DoS) is one of the first government institutions that have accompanied the establishment of the Jordanian state in 1946. The DoS was founded in 1949. Act No. 24 of 1950 and its amendments and the Provisional Law of Statistics No. 8 of 2003 have defined the its work, functions and responsibilities as the only governmental agency authorized to collect information and statistical data. The DoS started the field and office work with a modest staff, and provided basic statistical data on social and economic aspects during that period. The first Housing Census of 1952, the National Accounts Estimates of the Kingdom and the Statistical Yearbook were the most prominent statistical activities conducted by the Department of Statistics.

Next decade,(in the sixties), The DoS has implemented the first General Population and Housing Census in 1961, in addition to the first Multi – Purpose Household Survey . The DoS also issued several publications for the first time such as the Agricultural Statistical Bulletin, the External Trade Bulletin and the Industrial Study Bulletin. Later, new topics such as construction statistics, domestic trade, health, unemployment ...etc. has been tackled.

The DoS has made notable strides in the last decade of the last century in the field of information systems and technical know-how which facilitated the extraction of statistical data used in policy and decision-making and scientific research in various specialized fields.

During the early years of this millennium, the DoS has focused on strengthening institutional capacity, including infrastructure, human resources and statistical awareness among the public which positively affect the quality of the statistical products. The DoS has also paid attention to strengthening links with data users in order to build trust with them.

1 – *Achievements made throughout the evolution process:*

1 – Expanding the range of surveys subject wise that have covered social, economic, agricultural and other subjects.

2 – The means of data dissemination have been modernized such as improving the quality of hard copies (significant improvement in the design, production and printing of statistical paper publications in terms of content and format). The Statistical Yearbook of 1998 and the External trade Yearbook of 1998 too, have been published on CD-RoM format for the first time in addition to the hard copy format. The DoS has subscribed to the GDDS and the SDDS enforced by the IMF .

3 – Remarkable improvement in the distribution process of statistical materials, the quantity of hard copies has been reduced and was gradually replaced by electronic copies.

4 – Creation of a web site in the late nineties. A special team is entrusted with updating the site continuously by posting all statistical and general material on it. The number of visitors to the site is steadily increasing.

5 – Implementation of various censuses and surveys and releasing and publishing of the results in different forms began to be done in accordance with a pre-set timetable.

6 – Expanding the users' data base to include most of the data users in the society.

7 – Laying more emphasis on the producer-user dialogue.

8 – Strengthening the channels of communications with the media means (such as: the press, radio and television).

9 – Maintaining friendly relations with the Arab and foreign statistical organizations through exchange of statistical data, publications, and training and study tours, in addition to cooperation with organizations of the League of Arab States and the United Nations specialized agencies. Several joint cooperation agreements have been signed with various statistical parties for exchanging expertise and implementation of joint projects.

10 – Distribution of free statistical brochures (Jordan in Figures) and materials (souvenirs) to respondents to encourage mutual cooperation with them.

12 – Assessment of the work through a periodic data – user satisfaction questionnaire that serves as a barometer to measure the views of data users.

13 – Training and Capacity – Building: participation in seminars, conferences and workshops on statistics, inside or outside the country for upgrading the standard of employees.

2 - Services offered by the DoS

- Distribution of hundreds of copies of each statistical bulletin free of charge to various parties.
- Provide raw data to researchers and students.
- Conducting surveys and specialized studies to the public and private institutions.

3 - Future plans of the DoS:

First: updating and maintaining the statistical system: through the modernization of the following legislation governing the statistical work:

A – Updating the Statistics Law to include the following:

- Establishment of a Central Bureau of Statistics as a legal successor of the Department of Statistics.
- The planned Central Bureau of Statistics is to enjoy administrative and financial independence.
- The planned Central Bureau of Statistics is to play the role of a focal point in the national statistical system.
- Emphasize the importance of coordination of statistical work in the areas of collection and dissemination of data and identify time frames for that.
- Emphasis on the importance of statistical awareness.
- The establishment and management of a statistical training center.
- Formation of a Board of Directors of the planned Central Bureau of Statistics under the chairmanship of His Excellency the Minister of Planning and International Cooperation.

- Granting the right to the Central Bureau of Statistics to access the statistical records available at the partner institutions, taking into account confidentiality.

B – Introduction of new legislations to include the following:

- A system for the employees of the Central Bureau of Statistics.
 - A financial system for the Central Bureau for Statistics.
 - A system for the Statistical Training Center.
 - A system for licensing the commercial centers that implement field research and surveys.
 - A system for the national registry of enterprises (establishments).
- To develop a system for data flow from external resources to the DoS based on their administrative records.

Second: the institutionalization of the statistical work: This includes the establishment of the Central Bureau of Statistics in accordance with the proposed amendments to the aforementioned law of statistics

- Comprehensive review of the current organizational structure of the Department of Statistics to cope with the new vision and mission.

- Rehabilitating all partner institutions in statistical work.

Third: the development of infrastructure for the statistical system as follows:

A - The institutionalization of statistical training.

B - The development of physical infrastructure through maintenance of buildings and regional offices.

C - Development of technical capacity in the field of statistical work: by providing the most modern hardware and software needed.

D - Development of information management systems in partner institutions by updating and linking the existing databases in partner institutions.

Fourth: Development of human capacity:

A – Training of employees.

B - Promotion of scientific research.

Fifth: Improving the quality and quantity of data produced: development of methodologies for statistical work, and taking into account consistency, this is done through the following means:

- A - Development of methodologies and methods of work.
- B - Development of methods and methodologies for data collection.
- C - Accuracy, reliability and timeliness.

Sixth: Increasing awareness of the public as follows:

- A – Creating awareness through the inclusion of materials in the curricula of universities and schools and awareness campaigns in various media means.
- B - Development of data dissemination methods.

Seventh: Technology development:

(i.e. Data warehouse and data mining and electronic publishing ..etc.

3 – The National Statistical Strategy (2008 – 2012):

The National Statistical Strategy has been prepared and is currently implemented for achieving the following goals:

- 1 - To develop and sustain the statistical system.
- 2 – To improve the quality and quantity of data produced.
- 3 – To enhance national statistical awareness.

4 - The situation in other institutions:

Most of other government, private and non-profit organizations have their own statistical sections who collect their own specialized data, print and publish the results annually or periodically. The DoS utilizes some of these data, but remains the sole official reliable source of statistics.
