

International Technical Support

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Editorial

This latest issue of INSEE's International Technical Support newsletter has a special dossier devoted to the twinning programme with Statistiques Tunisie, the Tunisian National Statistical Institute: the dossier contains five articles, including an interview with Mr Hedi Saidi, Director General of the Tunisian NSI.

As a member of a consortium led by Expertise France, INSEE is also committed to an extensive cooperation programme with the African Union: the Pan-African Statistical Programme. An article describes our involvement in this project, on the theme of national accountancy and the ERETES tool for drawing up national accounts.

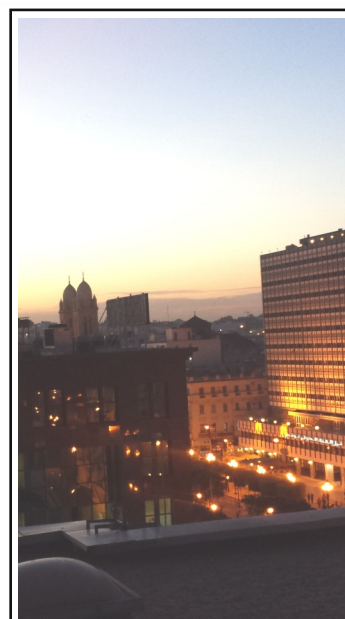
There is also an interview with Ms Claire Plateau, who describes her work as the French representative on the United Nations expert group on

indicators for monitoring sustainable development goals.

The next article describes the financial support that the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) has been giving to INSEE since 2015 for study visits by eastern European statisticians from countries that are partners of the EU's European Neighbourhood Policy.

The last article describes a scientific writing workshop, run in mid-2016 in Bamako (Mali) by two French researchers, aimed at Afristat experts and teachers from the African statistics schools.

This newsletter ends with a description of all the international cooperation projects carried out by INSEE and its partners, the French Ministerial Statistical Offices, during the first semester of 2016. Enjoy!



*Night view of
Habib-Bourguiba
Avenue, main
artery of the city
of Tunis (Tunisia)*

Kick-off seminar for the twinning programme with Statistiques Tunisie

From the beginning of 2016, and for a period of two years, Statistiques Tunisie has benefitted from a twinning programme with EU funding.¹ INSEE won the tender for this programme, carried out in collaboration with ISTAT (Italy) and with the participation of Statistics Lithuania. This project aiming to modernise the Tunisian statistical system is part of the programme of support to the Association Agreement and the Transition Process (P3AT), between Tunisia and the European Union.

The kick-off seminar took place on 4 October 2016 in Tunis.

The opening ceremony was presided by a representative of Tunisia's Minister for Development, Investment and International Cooperation, in the presence of the EU's ambassador to Tunisia and the Chairman of the board of Expertise France, the French international technical expertise agency.

The speakers described the importance of official statistics in the new Tunisian democracy and presented the project's key challenges to various stakeholders in the country's economic and political life. There are three challenges: strengthening governance of the statistical system, improving statistical output and achieving better communication and data dissemination.

Mr Hedi Saidi, Director General of Statistiques Tunisie, then presented the twinning project.



Kick-off seminar for the twinning with Statistiques Tunisie. From left to right: Mr Jean-Luc TAVERNIER, Director General of INSEE; Mr Hedi SAIDI, Director General of Statistiques Tunisie; Mr Abdel-Rahmen EL LAHGA, representative of the Tunisian trade unions and Associate Professor of economics at Tunis University

The seminar ended with a round table session on the theme: "Towards better governance of the Tunisian statistical system".

Apart from Mr Saïdi, the participants at the round table included Mr Ridha Lahouel, Chairman of the Tunisian National Statistical Council, Mr Abdel-Rahmen El Lahga, Associate Professor in Economics at Tunis University, representing the main Tunisian trade union, the UGTT (Tunisian General Labour Union), Mr Giorgio Alleva, Chairman of ISTAT, the Italian Statistical Institute and Mr Jean-Luc Tavernier, Director General of INSEE.

During the round table, Mr Tavernier presented the French statistical system and listed the elements that are vital to its proper functioning: coordination between the statistical services, dialogue with users and independence of official statistics.

Measured by the number of participants and the quality of the exchanges, the seminar was a success.

► Georges BOURDALLÉ

1. See also newsletter no. 5, dated December 2015 (pp. 6 and 7).

The twinning with Statistiques Tunisie has begun

The twinning between INSEE and Statistiques Tunisie officially began in January 2016.

The project, which is set to last two years, is mainly carried out in partnership with ISTAT, the Italian NSI, with participation from Statistics Lithuania.

The twinning, whose main objective is the modernisation of the Tunisian National Statistical Institute, includes 19 projects, grouped into five strands:

- A - The legislative and institutional framework of the statistical system
- B - Modernisation of Statistiques Tunisie
- C - Revision of the national accounting system
- D - Development of regional statistics
- E - Dissemination and communication policy

In practice, work started in March 2016 with missions in Tunis by the different heads of the strands, followed by the project team leaders. The objective of these missions was to assess the existing situation and to propose a road map for the following two years.

The project includes a total of 675 days of expertise and will mobilise around 50 experts from the three European institutes, but also retired INSEE staff and a number of representatives of the French Ministerial Statistical Offices.¹

Senior managers from the Tunisian NSI are of course heavily involved in the project: on the one hand, progress in the work on each project is monitored by one of them; on the other hand, they are expected to contribute actively to the improvements made to the existing system.



Steering Committee for the twinning with Statistiques Tunisie

On the other hand, it is possible that other activities may be identified as requiring more time than planned.

A steering committee, which meets quarterly, measures progress in the work and ratifies any modifications.

The project is implemented mainly through technical support missions in Tunisia, but also through continuous action by the Tunisian partners.

The project also includes eight study visits to partner NSIs.

From tender response to project implementation

European twinning is a very formal process that leaves limited room for manoeuvre to NSIs responding to this kind of call for tender. The contents of the final proposal must include all the actions set out in the initial call for tender (even for the deliverables).

Nevertheless, this constraint can be overcome during the implementation of the programme: as the project progresses, the partners can, for example, identify activities that will require less time than anticipated, either because they have been dealt with in record time, or because their scope has been reduced.

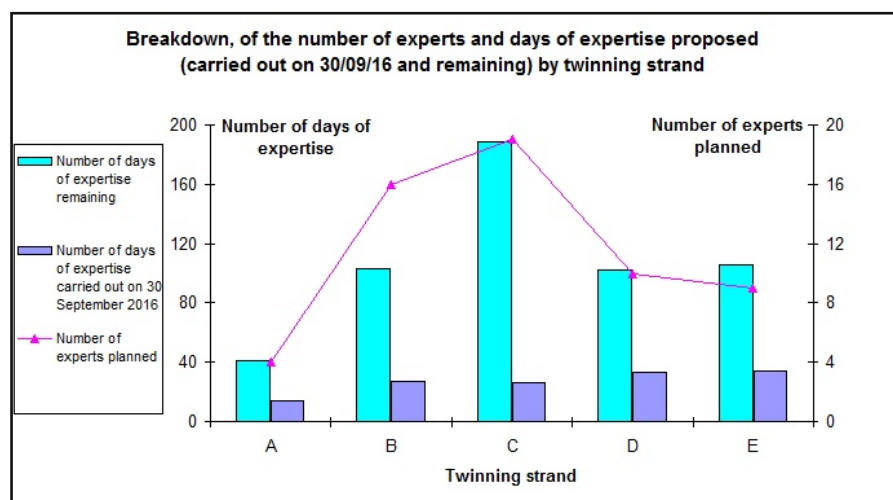
An initial appraisal after eight months of activity

At the end of September 2016, 23 missions had been carried out in most of the defined activities, with a volume of 136 days, i.e. 20% of the number of days programmed (Figure 1).

Two study visits have also been undertaken, in France and Italy.

Moreover, 19 missions and 100 days of expertise are planned before the end of 2016, taking the level of completion to 36%.

Figure 1 [Source: data from the twinning with Statistiques Tunisie]



1. Observation and Statistics Service (SOeS) of the Ministry for the Environment, Energy and the Sea and the Directorate-General of Public Finances (DGFIP).

Strengthening of links with our partners

Relations with Statistiques Tunisie are long-standing and durable. The implementation of this twinning has enabled INSEE to strengthen the partnership.

The twinning also provides the opportunity to work with two European NSIs, ISTAT as a junior partner and Statistics Lithuania (Figure 2) as a contributor.

The collaboration with ISTAT colleagues is sometimes based on complementarity of expertise, sometimes on joint interventions, which leads to relative flexibility in the mobilisation of experts.

The collaboration with Statistics Lithuania is limited to a single activity (ISO certification) for a limited number of days (20 days of mission in Tunis and a visit by Tunisian managers to Vilnius).

In several activities, the experts from the different Institutes work together, which gives Statistiques Tunisie different points of view on a particular subject and also enables exchanges between European NSIs.

Successes and difficulties

It is still a little early to predict the success of the different activities.

Nevertheless, several of them

already seem to be on the right track, including: the calculation of regional GDP, led by an expert from INSEE and use of the SDMX data exchange standard, led by experts from ISTAT.

The majority of the difficulties result from the fact that the twinning has a limited duration (two years with the possibility of a three-month extension).

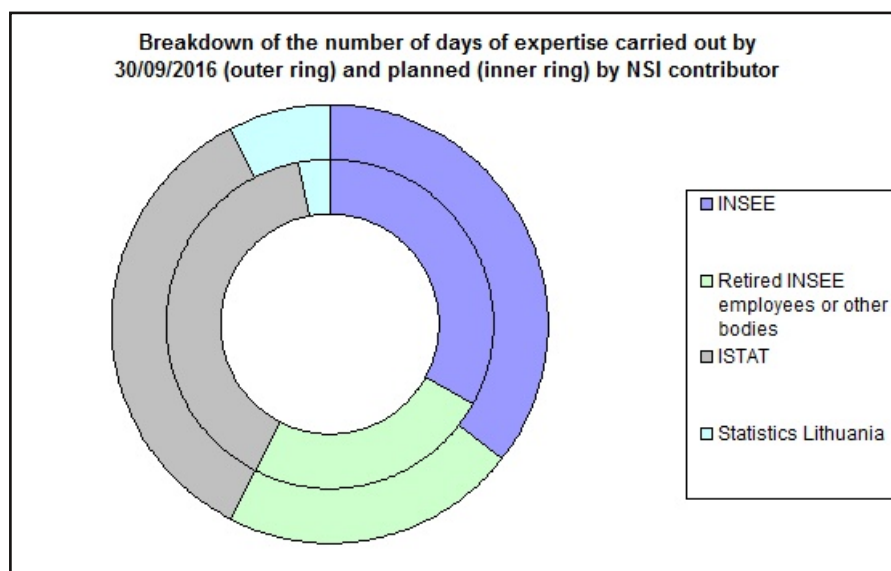
Certain activities, such as the switchover to the 2008 System of National Accounts (SNA), require information that has not yet been produced. These activities cannot, therefore, be completed within the two years allocated to the twinning.

Moreover, every week missions take place that require the participation of several Tunisian NSI managers.

Given the limited number of employees in the central directorate, carrying out their normal activities as well as those linked to the twinning represents a challenge for Statistiques Tunisie managers.

► Dominique FRANCOZ

Figure 2 [Source: data from the twinning with Statistiques Tunisie]



Interview with Mr Pierre Muller, head of the National Accounting and Regional Statistics strands for the twinning with Tunisia

Mr Pierre Muller¹ is involved in the current twinning between INSEE and Statistiques Tunisie as the head of two major strands, one (Strand C) devoted to the revision of the national accounting system and the other (Strand D) to the development of regional statistics.



From left to right, representatives of Statistiques Tunisie: Mr Kamel ABDELLAOUI, Director of Dissemination; Mr Mohsen HAJJEJ, Head of Department; Mr Mustapha BOUZAYANE, Central Director of National Accounts; Ms Samira OUADDAY, Central Director of Regional Statistics; Mr Hedi SAIDI, Director General; Ms Mouna ZGOULLI, Tunisian opposite number of the resident counsellor for twinning and Central Director of Dissemination, IT and Coordination; representatives of the French and Italian NSIs: Mr Pierre MULLER, Head of the National Accounting and Regional Statistics strands of the twinning, INSEE; Ms Sara DEMOFONTI, Head of the Social and Environmental Statistics Department, ISTAT; Mr Francesco RIZZO, Head of the Enterprise Architecture Project, ISTAT; Mr Jean-Pierre CLING, resident twinning counsellor, INSEE; Mr Giovanni BARBIERI, Director of Enterprise Statistics, ISTAT

What is expected of these two strands and what are their key elements?

For Strand C, which involves Tunisia's national accounting system, the expectations are many, varied and ambitious.

In the first place, it involves changing the base for the national accounts, as the current 1997 base is rather old.

Apart from a major update of levels, including the "volume-price" split,

and the adoption of the 2009 classifications of activities and products, the operation should make it possible to take into account information from a wide range of new or renewed statistical sources, for enterprises, households, public authorities and external relations...

This change of base will provide the opportunity to introduce other changes into the Tunisian national accounting system, such as those, for example, relating to the new international standard of national

accounts (SNA 2008), and the financial asset accounts for all the institutional sectors.

Another important aspect is the "informal" sector, whose evaluation by the national accounts will be the subject of thorough investigation. The resulting measures should act as a reference for all users.

Strand C also involves Tunisia's quarterly accounts, with the aim of introducing a "demand" aspect in addition to the current "production" view.

1. Pierre Muller is the former head of INSEE's General Inspectorate. He was Regional Director in the Pays de la Loire and in Lorraine. He was also head of the Institute's National Accountancy Concepts division.

The regional dimension is also part of Strand C, with the objective of instituting regular evaluations of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for each of the Tunisian Republic's districts (major regions). Finally, it is planned to develop statistics and accounts in Tunisia's most strategic environmental fields, with this objective forming part of a wider aim of implementing satellite accounts within the Tunisian national accounts.

Strand D involves the regional directorates of the Tunisian NSI and the regional statistics system. The first objective is to provide support to Statistiques Tunisie in achieving its ambition of setting up a new organisation for its regional directorates, in both functional and territorial terms. This objective implies very considerable strengthening of the training provided to the personnel of regional directorates, with the help provided to the Tunisian NSI in this context representing a second objective for Strand D.

A third objective is to considerably speed up the expansion of regional and local statistics, for which there is very strong demand in Tunisia. The fields to be covered are very varied: demography, employment and unemployment, living conditions, poverty and precarity, infrastructure, economy... This expansion will involve increased cooperation with all the organisations that produce statistics, in particular the ministries, and development of the use of administrative sources for statistical purposes.

What activities have been carried out so far and what are the initial results?

For Strand C, the implications for Tunisia of the changes resulting from the new international standard of national accounts (SNA 2008) have been determined. Six main changes have been identified,

concerning the treatment of flows related to international subcontracting, military spending, research and development and to the accounts of the Tunisian Central Bank. Overall, the changes involved are fairly limited for two inter-connected reasons: the revisions introduced by SNA 2008 are far from being as significant as those brought in by the previous version (SNA 1993), which were taken into account by the Tunisian National Accounts when the existing base was introduced (1997).

Moreover, given the range of statistical sources that could be used for the change of base, the choice was made to use a series including two base years (2015 and 2016) rather than one alone. The evaluation work has begun, but 2017 will be decisive for successful completion of the operation to change the base.

A start has been made on detailed consideration of two aspects of the informal sector: the definition of the sector to be taken by the Tunisian national accounts and the modifications to be made to statistical sources. In other words, the objective is to arrive at the most relevant measurement possible of the informal sector and to define the extrapolation methods to be used in order to correct, as far as possible, the results from surveys in which this sector is under-represented.

Employment surveys are expected to play a decisive role in this system, which will be a major innovation for the process of drawing up the national accounts. Another aspect to note for Strand C is the rapid progress with work to regionalise GDP figures. In 2017, Statistiques Tunisie should possess evaluations of GDP for the year 2013 for each major region of the Tunisian Republic, also with the detail of added value for some 20 sectors of activity.

As far as the regional directorates (RD) of the Tunisian NSI are concerned (Strand D), a "target organisation" has been defined in agreement with the Tunisians. In the first place, it includes a geographical dimension, proposing that each governorship – and no longer only each major region as at present – should have its own RD.

Secondly, the missions attributed to the RDs will be significantly widened, with a role of dissemination and communication of information produced by Statistiques Tunisie, in addition to their missions of data collection and resource management, particularly (but not only) destined for the decision-making organs of the governorships.

Nevertheless, before being rolled out nationwide, the target organisation will be the subject of an experiment in a certain number of the local offices of the Tunisian NSI. Launched at the beginning of October, the experiment will last for one year and the decision to roll it out nationally will only be taken after a rigorous evaluation of the lessons that have been learned.

As far as the system of local and regional statistics is concerned, an action plan has just been drawn up, based on the fairly rich statistical system at the disposal of Statistiques Tunisie: population and housing census, employment survey, budget-consumption survey, register of enterprises and their establishments...

There are three objectives: to broaden the range of localised information produced by the Tunisian NSI, and ultimately by the whole of the official statistical system, to increase the visibility of this information and to strengthen the NSI's technical coordination role.

2. The 24 Tunisian governorships are local authorities headed by governors, nominated by the President of the Republic on the basis of a proposal from the Interior Minister. The governorship of Tunis (lying in the northeast of the country and including the capital) is both the most populous (1.1 million inhabitants) and the smallest (288 km²); at the other end of the scale the least populous is the governorship of Tozeur (150,000 inhabitants, in the west of the country) while the biggest is the governorship of Tataouine (39,000 km², in the south).

What is planned for the months to come?

Between now and the end of 2016, Statistiques Tunisie should be in a position to cost the greater part of the impacts related to the implementation of the new international standard of national accounts (SNA 2008). The biggest challenge will be the new way of dealing with international subcontracting, which calls for close cooperation with the Customs Service and the Central Bank (which publishes the balance of payments).

In addition, the statistical system to be introduced to achieve the planned progress in including the informal sector should be defined, with two aspects in particular: on the one hand, what changes must be made to the employment survey, and on the other hand, what system of surveys should be used for micro-enterprises in 2017?

The first semester of 2017 will be decisive for progress in the work of evaluating the new base (2015 initially), involving the establishment of revised accounts for the institutional sectors with complete accounts: public administrative bodies, financial corporations and the rest of the world.

This period will also see the beginning of work on non-financial corporations and households, as well as goods and services accounts, but these will really gather pace from the second semester of 2017. A very significant proportion of the evaluations pertaining to the 2015 base year should be completed by the end of 2017 but, given the scale of the task, the 2015 accounts for the new base will only be completely finished in mid-2018. Those for 2016 will be finished a year later, while the backcasted series (at least to 1997) are expected at the end of 2018.

The first months of 2017 will also be used to make progress on the

inclusion of a "demand" aspect in the process of drawing up the quarterly Tunisian accounts. This said, given the limited means available to the Tunisian NSI and the inadequacy of the statistical sources, the objectives are likely to be reviewed downwards in relation to the initial plan and, in any event, the "production" aspect will remain determinant for the quarterly accounts.

Moreover, a second year of regionalisation of the GDP and added value could be added to that (referring to 2013) which has been the subject of an initial treatment. Finally, the discussions as to the directions that the expansion of environmental statistics and accounts should take should be up to full speed during this period.

As far as the organisation and the missions of the regional directorates are concerned (Strand D), the next few months will be devoted above all to overseeing and bringing expertise to the experimentation process for the target organisation. This work should be carried out centrally with Statistiques Tunisie, but also at the local level, involving experts travelling to the regions. The evaluation phase of the experiment, planned for autumn 2017, will be a decisive stage for generalising the target organisation from 2018 onwards.

Finally, the first semester of 2017 will include several important deadlines for the deployment of the action plan relating to the development of the regional and local statistics system, for the three objectives mentioned previously: widening the range of information, particularly in the fields of demography, employment-unemployment and insecurity-poverty; improving the visibility of this information; and strengthening the coordinating role of the Tunisian NSI, in particular with the planned changes in the annual publication Governorships in figures.

Why did you want to take part in this twinning?

There were two basic reasons. First, my liking for international cooperation, which I have practiced widely throughout my professional career, particularly in the field of national accounts, and that I have always considered to be both interesting and very instructive. I would even go as far as to say that it is essential to the job of a statistician and national accountant because it provides an in-depth understanding of other experiences and professional contexts.

Secondly, my desire to renew a cooperation in which I had taken part long ago and which had brought me so much. In fact, between 1984 and 1990 I made a large contribution to the bilateral cooperation between INSEE and Statistiques Tunisie to set up the first version of the Tunisian National Accounts. That cooperation, under the aegis of André Vanoli, was very fruitful for both parties, from both professional and personal viewpoints. It also allowed me to better get to know a country that is very appealing and which merits, even more now than at that time, as much of our support as possible!

► *Interview by Dominique FRANCOZ*

Interview with Mr Hedi Saidi, Director General of Statistiques Tunisie

How is the twinning project going, what assessment would you make a year after it began and are there already changes to be seen within Statistiques Tunisie?

Before talking about the state of progress with the “modernisation of the Tunisian statistical system” twinning project, which began in 2016 for a period of two years, I would first like to express my sincere thanks to our three NSI partners, INSEE, ISTAT (Italy) and Statistics Lithuania, for all the effort made to date.

I would also like to thank my colleagues from Statistiques Tunisie for their commitment and the efforts that they have made, despite the weight of the tasks that are entrusted to them to guarantee statistical output from our establishment.

Mr Jean-Pierre Cling, resident twinning advisor, and Ms Mouna Zgoulli, his Tunisian counterpart, have also played an important role in facilitating the task of the various experts engaged in the project, and I would also like to thank them for their professionalism and the quality of their expertise.

As far as progress with the project is concerned, in my opinion the results are very positive. Practically all the activities planned within the framework of the project have started and are, for the most part, well advanced and on schedule. The very large number of technical assistance missions carried out in one year (44 in total, representing 234 man-days) bears witness to the amount of work already accomplished.

Several changes are already taking place within the NSI, particularly in relation to the start in October 2016 of an experiment concerning seven regional directorates and which includes a new operating architecture and a new geographical organisation.



Mr Hedi SAIDI, Director General of Statistiques Tunisie

Another change is already perceptible, thanks to the commitment of the managers of pilot sites and the collective will to see the project succeed, particularly in terms of managing surveys in the field, which has led to a noticeable improvement in the response rate.

Concerning the national accounts, perceptible progress has been made in taking into account the recommendations of the SNA 2008, and, above all, in the work related to changing the base year and the estimation of the proportion of the informal sector in the national economy.

Unlooked for results have been obtained in the field of training, with the introduction of a proper training plan and training of the trainers in pedagogical methods.

Without forgetting dissemination and relations with users, themes on which meetings have been

organised with the latter in order to have a better idea of their expectations in terms of statistics produced by the NSI; a very interesting training course on techniques of data exchange has also been organised.

For the institutional strand, a new law covering statistics is in the process of being drawn up. In particular, it will strengthen the professional independence of data producers and ensure good governance of the Tunisian statistical system.

The twinning has also started in relation to the organisation of the NSI itself, with the exploration of new avenues which should result, during 2018, in a quality-orientated organisation chart and improved functioning of the different structures, particularly involving the creation of new functions such as training and methodology.

What are the main results that you expect from this twinning?

The main aim of the project is to institute a statistical information system that is consistent, efficient and permanent, essentially through two specific channels: on the one hand, the proposal of a legislative and institutional framework that is conducive to better governance in terms of official statistics, which will play their role fully and efficiently, and on the other hand, the consolidation of the NSI's role as the main actor in the national statistical system.

At the end of the twinning, the following five results should have been achieved:

- a revised legislative and institutional framework for the Tunisian statistical system;
- a modernisation programme for Statistiques Tunisie drawn up and its implementation begun;
- a revised Tunisian national accounting system that is compliant with SNA 2008;
- an action plan for the development of regional statistics defined and its implementation begun;
- a strengthened dissemination and communication policy for Statistiques Tunisie.

Given what has been achieved to date, we will be able to finish some of the activities, such as the Statistics Law and the new organisation of the NSI, before the end of the twinning in 2018, and also a few activities relating to national accounting and training.

How are the current or anticipated changes perceived by NSI employees and by your external partners?

With great satisfaction and a lot of responsibility!

It is already possible to see the dynamic that the project has created within the NSI and the commitment of managers to the success of the different planned activities. In the same way, our external partners are involved in different activities in the project, essentially the setting up of the new national accounting system and the development of regional statistics, and they are conscious of the primordial role that the NSI must play in terms of the technical coordination and quality management of the national statistical system's output.

As the twinning project moves forward, have new needs made themselves felt? If so, could any of them be included in the twinning?

As the project moves forward, we have realised that many of the activities are inter-related and that some of them, such as the development of regional statistics, imply new, one-off needs on themes that were not initially included in the project.

This is particularly the case with the Employment Survey and the production of a regional consumer price index.

There are also new requirements in terms of training, formulated by colleagues as this activity develops, particularly in internal and external communication and strategic management.

Do you have an idea of how things will go after the end of the twinning, and can you already envisage actions that could be instituted at the end of the project in order to make the benefits durable?

The twinning is the start of a modernisation process for the Tunisian statistical system. It will enable us to put into place the main pillars of this modernisation, in compliance with international standards.

This involves drawing up a Statistics Law that will lead to better governance of official statistics, and which will play its role fully and efficiently; that also implies consolidating the NSI's role as the main actor in the national statistical system.

I am also thinking of the exercise carried out up to now in relation to national accounting, which should certainly continue beyond the twinning period; a precise programme must be planned, to guarantee the conditions for success of the different activities already begun.

Given their importance, regional statistics represent another challenge to be taken up by the producers, who should, amongst other things, guarantee their durability.

The Labour Force Survey is another avenue to develop with our partners, particularly INSEE, to improve the quality of the data produced and to strengthen all the processes of this essential survey.

I would also stress the importance of quality and the certification of the NSI, as well as strengthening the abilities of NSI personnel with the aim of professionalising them and making them more responsible.

► *Interview by Dominique FRANCOZ*

INSEE's commitment to the Pan-African Statistics Programme

In March 2015, the European Union launched a far-reaching cooperation programme, covering the period 2016-2019, to the benefit of the African Union.

This continent-wide body, which brings together practically all the African countries (54 member states at the time of writing), is based in the Ethiopian capital of Addis-Ababa.

The programme covers different fields: governance, research and education, communication, migration, transport, infrastructure...

The cooperation project's statistical dimension, known as the Pan-African Statistics Programme, aims to strengthen the African statistical system and establish reliable and comparable statistics in order to facilitate monitoring of progress in society and the integration process in Africa.

A consortium led by Expertise France, the French international technical expertise agency, won the tender for this project.

The consortium consists of GIZ-IS (the German federal agency for international cooperation), Oxford Policy Management (British cooperation agency and consultant), INSEE and the following NSIs: ISTAT (Italy), DESTATIS (Germany) and Statistics Netherlands.

INSEE is involved in four of the eight components of the project, with particular involvement in the theme of national accounts and ERETES.

This tool, which helps with the production of national accounts, was jointly developed by INSEE and Eurostat, based on the methodology and experience of the French national accounts system.

Aimed at countries that do not have their own national accounts information system, ERETES has



Headquarters of the African Union in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia)

been deployed over the last 20 or so years in French, English and Spanish and is currently used in more than 25 statistical institutes in Africa, South America and the Middle East.

ERETES has proved itself particularly well in French-speaking sub-Saharan Africa, and it is clearly identified as the reference tool for assistance with drawing up national accounts, to the point where its wider use is now envisaged, particularly in English-speaking NSIs which – beyond the linguistic difference which is resolved by an English version of ERETES – have a slightly different approach to national accountancy.

The revision of the features of ERETES will be a task in itself for the Pan-African Statistical Programme, as part of an approach to harmonising and improving statistical production in Africa.

The programme thus provides the opportunity to broaden the features of the tool to respond more effectively to the needs of future users, to modernise its architecture to facilitate its upgradability and maintenance, and to ensure that it can be disseminated more freely,

by linking it to a database management system and an open-source programming language.

This element of the project has been entrusted to INSEE and in particular to the team responsible for the ERETES tool within the International Technical Support Division.

The first phase of the project will involve carrying out consultation with the objective, on the one hand, of listing the needs of future users and, on the other, of enhancing and improving the tool based on the experience of current users.

This phase will take the form of workshops on the use and improvement of the tool and of a survey launched via an on-line questionnaire. The resulting list of needs will provide the basis for the preliminary study and the review of the tool's specifications.

The final step will be to find the finance to re-write ERETES, based on these specifications.

► Jean-Samy AZIZ

Interview with Ms Claire Plateau, French representative on the United Nations expert group on indicators for monitoring the achievement of sustainable development goals

In what context was the UN group on indicators for monitoring the achievement of sustainable development goals created and how does it operate?

During its 46th session in March 2015, the United Nations Statistics Commission created an inter-agency expert group on the indicators for monitoring the achievement of sustainable development goals (or SDGs¹), the IAEG-SDGs.

This group is composed of 27 members chosen to give balanced representation of the world's different regions, to which is added the representative of the country chairing the Statistics Commission, if it is not already a member of the group. The international and regional agencies and the regional commissions are observers.

The group also invites other stakeholders, including associations, universities and the private sector, to attend its meetings and provide contributions during the consultations. Half the members of the group are renewed every two years.

The group meets physically twice a year and the rest of the time works by electronic exchanges. There are two co-chairs (Philippines and Mexico).

The group's secretariat is provided by the UN's Statistics Division. Every year, the group writes a report for the Statistics Commission and receives its work plan for the following year from the Commission.

The IAEG-SDGs was asked to present a draft list of indicators for monitoring SDGs at a global level. In March 2016, the Statistics Commission adopted this list as a starting point. The IAEG-SDGs' work over the next 15 years will be to organise the implementation of



Meeting of the UN's expert group on indicators for monitoring sustainable development goals in Bangkok (Thailand), October 2015

the indicators and to revise the list. Initially this will involve identifying the indicators and classifying them according to their feasibility.²

The agencies responsible for the indicators send the IAEG-SDGs metadata for each indicator, proposals for a development plan for the indicators and a draft classification of the indicators by category.

The IAEG-SDGs examine these proposals, taking advice from the statistical institutes and experts in the relevant field. It also receives contributions from numerous stakeholders (NGOs, associations).

Once all the information has been collected, the group suggests how the proposals should be followed up. In this way, it has chosen the revision process for the list of indicators: revision in 2020 and 2025, and adjustment in 2017. With this system of governance, the definition and the implementation of the indicators really is a country-led process.

What is France's role in the group?

France contributes to the definition of the list of indicators and its implementation. As the French representative in the group, my role is to contribute to information sharing and dialogue between the different stakeholders in France, but also with other European countries and European international bodies such as UNECE and EUROSTAT.

For example, I regularly review the progress made in this work in the EUROSTAT group responsible for sustainable development indicators. I also inform the French statistical institutions of the role played by the agencies responsible for the indicators and of the organisation of data flows between countries and agencies.

In addition, I am a member of the Steering Group set up by the Conference of European Statisticians and I contribute to the definition of the road map for the implementation of SDGs in Europe.

1. For more about the SDGs, see the *International Technical Support newsletter* no. 6 (<https://www.insee.fr/en/information/2404021>).

2. <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/47th-session/documents/>

Within the IAEG-SDGs, I give the French point of view and validate the proposals made for the choice of indicators and their implementation (validation of metadata and development plans for the indicators).

I am also the spokeswoman for the Member States: request for data collection schedules, details of data flows, quality control of the data produced by the agencies...

For each indicator, I represent the position of the responsible department within the official statistical service, that I have previously informed of the underlying questions, points where particular vigilance is required and the positions of the other members of the group, to help it make its decision.

More generally, I contribute to the organisation of the work of the IAEG-SDGs: meeting agendas, validation processes, setting up of sub-groups, synthesis of information, writing the report for the Statistics Commission.

In order to solicit the opinion of the different stakeholders, I first have to make a synthesis of the many documents sent, analyse them, prepare the questions to be examined and even suggest answers, send all these elements to the right person and, finally, make sure that I receive the responses on time (there is no summer break for the work of the IAEG-SDGs!).

Although the work of the IAEG-SDGs is purely statistical, the consultation must also be widened to include the Ministry that contributed to drawing up the target.

What is the role of the French official statistical system in the group, and what consequences does that have for its work?

The French official statistical system is heavily solicited and its contribution is important because it works out what positions France should take on all the statistical questions put to the group.

On the other hand, the group's work and its decisions have a major impact on the work of the official statistical system. It has to provide the required indicators, which is a statistical challenge, even for the most advanced countries...

In this context, the Statistical Coordination Mission of INSEE's Directorate of Methodology and Statistical and International Coordination (DMCSI) made an initial evaluation of the feasibility of the indicators.

A third of the indicators are available, increasing to two thirds if one accepts indicators that approach those chosen. This rate of availability could reach 87% in the short to medium term (one to three years), the remaining 13% having low feasibility. The SOeS,³ INSEE and the DREES⁴ are the biggest providers of indicators.

The indicators cover all the fields traditionally covered by the statistical system and even beyond. It is not surprising that more difficulties appear in seeking to cover certain, hitherto little explored, statistical fields such as governance and confidence in society.

The CNIS⁵ takes these needs into account in the opinions that it gives.

Thus, the CNIS Environment and Sustainable Development Commission always seeks guidance in terms of SDGs for the different subjects brought to the table, in order to be able to give its advice on the ability of the French statistical system to respond to these new requests.

These objectives and targets, with their indicators that apply to everything, will act as a common general framework for statistical developments over the years to come at all levels – global, regional and national – and will contribute to their harmonisation. They will structure international statistical cooperation over the next 15 years in terms of both human and financial resources.

The statistics institutes will also have to examine the question of the definition of efficient and transparent dataflows between their institutes and the UN agencies and the question of harmonised and transparent communication of these sustainable development data at all levels (global, regional, national).

The IAEG-SDGs recommends the use of SDMX flows and the setting up of a national platform for data communication. These questions are already present in the road map that will be presented to the European Statistics Commission (CES Conference).

► *Interview by Constance TORELLI*

3. Observation and Statistics Department of the Ministry for the Environment, Energy and the Sea.

4. Directorate of Research, Studies, Evaluation and Statistics of the Ministry for Health and Social Security.

5. National Council for Statistical Information.

INSEE cooperation in eastern Europe: a financial support from EFTA since 2015

The European Free Trade Association is an inter-governmental organisation that promotes free trade and economic integration to the benefit of its four member States: Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

EFTA includes several institutions: a Council, a Secretariat (with a Statistical Office), a Surveillance Authority and a Court.

The Secretariat has premises in Geneva, Brussels and Luxembourg.

In Luxembourg, EFTA's Statistical Office is responsible for cooperation in the field of statistics, as well as technical cooperation programmes.¹

In this context, EFTA has provided support to INSEE since 2015, by contributing to the financing of study visits by statisticians from eastern European countries.

Five cooperation projects have so far benefitted from this agreement, mainly for Ukraine, but also Moldova (see table).

Other study visits are planned for 2017, with the same type of agreement with EFTA, which INSEE thanks for this financial support.

► *Serge DARRINÉ*

Beneficiary country and NSI	Date of study visit	Theme of study visit	Number of visitors	Languages interpreted
Moldova - NBS	February 2015	Structural enterprise statistics	3	French-Russian
Ukraine - SSSU	March 2015	European Prodcom regulation	5	French-Russian
Ukraine - SSSU	November 2015	Computer-assisted data collection (CAPI)	3	French-Russian
Ukraine - SSSU	December 2015	Metadata and quality	3	French-Russian
Ukraine - SSSU	October 2016	Construction industry Statistics	4	French-Russian



EFTA's Statistical Office, left to right: Mr Mirko HUBER, Trainee; Ms Rebecca GENTILE, Senior Assistant; Mr Volker TÄUBE, Director; Ms Ella BROWN, Assistant; Mr Lars SVENNEBYE, Deputy Director

1. In the field of statistics, EFTA cooperates with eastern Europe, the Caucasus and central Asia, and particularly with the countries that are partners in the European Neighbourhood Policy to the east of the European Union: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. EFTA also cooperates with the countries that are partners in the European Neighbourhood Policy to the south of the European Union (circum-Mediterranean), countries to the south east of the EU (Balkans and Turkey) and Mongolia.

Scientific writing workshop for Afristat and the African statistical schools

From 13 to 17 June 2016, a dozen Afristat experts and teachers from the African statistical schools took part in a scientific writing workshop.

Organised in Afristat's premises in Bamako (Mali), the workshop was part of a programme aimed at strengthening the capacities of these institutions, financed by the European Centre for Training Statisticians for Development.¹

The aim of the workshop was to train participants in writing techniques for academic articles and in the use of the corresponding publication tools, so that they are better able to make the most of their statistical and economic output.

The two trainers, Ms Camille Saint-Macary² and Ms Claire Zanuso,³ ran alternating theoretical and practical sessions, helping the experts to write a publication based on their own economic or statistical work.

Ms Emilie Laffiteau, expert in macro-economics at Afristat, also provided support when work was carried out in small groups.

This innovative and participative training course was based on a simple observation: experts create knowledge, but they fail to make



In the centre, from left to right: the three trainers, Ms Camille SAINT-MACARY, Ms Émilie LAFITTEAU and Ms Claire ZANUSO, surrounded by workshop participants

the most of it, because they lack mastery of the specific techniques and tools for academic publications.

The course presented the participants with the rules and standards applicable to scientific reviews, helped them to clarify their research questions, and worked with them on the structure of their articles and the presentation of results.

One of the expected outcomes of the workshop is to make the submission of articles to reviews like Stateco, coedited since 2004 by Afristat, INSEE and DIAL, more accessible.

This review, aimed at statisticians and economists working on socio-economic and demographic issues in both developing countries and those in transition, is a good vector for making the most of work by experts at Afristat and the African Statistical schools.

► *Camille SAINT-MACARY and Claire ZANUSO*

1. The objective of the centre, also known as "CESD statisticians for development", is to promote and support activities aiming to strengthen the human resources capacities of statistical institutions, through training of professionals in statistical, economic and social information in developing countries and particularly in sub-Saharan Africa.

2. Research officer at the Development, institutions and globalisation (DIAL) unit of the Institute for Development Research (IRD).

3. Associate researcher at DIAL.

Cooperation activities carried out by INSEE and partner ministerial statistical departments during the 1st semester 2016

N°	Date	Beneficiary countries and organisations	Type of action	Theme	Location
1	Jan -16	Tunisian NSI	Mission	meeting the actors in the European twinning with Statistiques Tunisie	Rome (Italy)
2		Maghreb states	Visit	training in R software for drawing up quarterly accounts	Paris (France)
3		Lebanon NSI	Mission	national accounts	Beirut (Lebanon)
4		NSIs of 15 African countries	Mission	taking account of the informal sector	Addis Ababa (Ethiopia)



4 - Meeting organised in January 2016 in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) by the African Centre for Statistics, with participants from around 15 French- and English-speaking African countries, on the theme of taking account of the informal sector in national accounts

N°	Date	Beneficiary countries and organisations	Type of action	Theme	Location
5	January and March 2016	Cameroon NSI	Mission	drawing up quarterly national accounts	Yaoundé (Cameroon)
6	Feb -16	Romanian NSI	Visit	health accounts	Paris (France)
7		Tunisian NSI	Mission	training in the ERETES tool for drawing up national accounts	Tunis (Tunisia)
8		Several Palestinian administrative bodies	Visit	business registers	Paris (France)



8 - Four members of the project for the development of enterprise registers in Palestine: Mr Philippe BRION, INSEE; Mr Jeries FAWADLA, representative of the municipality of Ramallah; Mr Saleh AL KAFRI, Director of Enterprise Statistics of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS); Mr Jan Robert SUESSER, Expertise France

N°	Date	Beneficiary countries and organisations	Type of action	Theme	Location
9	Feb - 16	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)	Mission	short-term statistics and presentation of the ERETES tool	Amman (Jordan)
10		Brazilian Central Bank	Visit	house price index	Paris (France)
11	Mar - 16	Tunisian NSI	Mission	legislative and institutional framework strand of twinning	Tunis (Tunisia)
12		Tunisian NSI	Mission	regional distribution of GDP	Tunis (Tunisia)
13		Tunisian NSI	Mission	training of personnel	Tunis (Tunisia)
14		Moroccan NSI	Visit	documentation and archiving	Paris (France)
15		Moroccan and Tunisian NSIs	Visit	responses to users	Paris (France)
16		Central Bank of West African States (CBWAS)	Mission	treatment of seasonality and use of JDemetra+ software	Dakar (Senegal)
17		Central Bank of West African States (CBWAS)	Visit	setting up a system for on-line surveys	Paris (France)



17 - Mr Mathurin DEMBO TOE, Forecaster at the Statistics Directorate of the Central Bank of West African States (CBWAS); Mr Thomas DUBOIS, Expert at the Development Department of the National IT Centre in Paris, INSEE; Mr Mahaman Tahir HAMANI, Deputy Director of Statistics of the CBWAS; Mr Cheikh NIANG, Project Manager at the Directorate of Information Systems of the CBWAS

N°	Date	Beneficiary countries and organisations	Type of action	Theme	Location
18	Mar - 16	West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU / UEMOA)	Mission	writing techniques applied to economic forecasting	Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso)



18 - The Burkina Faso National Institute for Statistics and Demographics (INSD), at Ouagadougou

N°	Date	Beneficiary countries and organisations	Type of action	Theme	Location
19	Mar -16	UN Statistical Commission	Mission	participation in the 47 th UN Statistical Commission, mainly devoted to sustainable development goals	New York (USA)
20	March and June 2016	Tunisian NSI	Missions	revision of national accounting system and development of regional statistics strands of twinning	Tunis (Tunisia)
21	March, April and June 2016	Lebanese finance ministry	Missions	macroeconomic forecasts	Beirut (Lebanon)
22	Apr-16	Serbian NSI	Mission	national accounts	Belgrade (Serbia)
23		Kazakh NSI	Visit	structural business statistics and changeover to national accounts	Paris (France)



23 - Left to right: Mr Arman KHALETOV, Expert in Structural Statistics, Kazakhstan Statistics Committee (KSC); Mr Emmanuel GROS, at the time Expert in the Department of Statistical Methods, INSEE; Mr Olivier HAAG, Expert in the Department of Registers, Infrastructure and Structural Statistics, INSEE; Mr Thierry MÉOT, Expert in the Department of Sector-specific Summaries, INSEE; Ms Marion ANTIER, Expert in the Department of National Accounts, INSEE; Ms Marina MISSYURA, Head of the Structural Statistics Unit, KSC; Mr Zhavlanbek RASSULOV, Expert in structural statistics, KSC; Mr Denis KASCHUBA, representative of DESTATIS; Ms Nina COLONNA-CESARI, French-Russian interpreter

N°	Date	Beneficiary countries and organisations	Type of action	Theme	Location
24	Apr-16	Tunisian NSI	Visit	national accounts and regional statistics strands of twinning	Paris (France)
25		Tunisian NSI	Mission	communication and relations with users	Tunis (Tunisia)
26		Tunisian NSI	Mission	reorganisation of regional statistics	Tunis (Tunisia)
27		Tunisian NSI	Mission	taking into account the informal sector	Tunis (Tunisia)
28		Ministry for Development, Planning and Statistics	Mission	producer price indices	Doha (Qatar)
29		African statistics schools and NSIs	Workshop	the links between research and statistics	Yaoundé (Cameroon)
30		African Group on National Accounts (AGNA)	Mission	participation in the AGNA meeting and presentation of the ERETES tool	Addis Ababa (Ethiopia)
31	May -16	Serbian NSI	Mission	national accounts	Belgrade (Serbia)
32		Russian NSI	Visit	statistics of innovation	Paris (France)



32 - Left to right: Ms Nina COLONNA-CESARI, French-Russian interpreter; Ms Olga DUDOROVA, Director of the Department of Statistics for Education, Science and Innovation, ROSSTAT; Ms Tatiana SYCHEVA, Senior Expert in the same department; Valery PODMASKO, Deputy Director of the same department; Ms Dominique FRANCOZ, Head of the International Technical Cooperation Division, INSEE; Ms Tamara RATNIKOVA, Head of Division within the Department of Statistics for Education, Science and Innovation, ROSSTAT; Ms Nicoleta PETRICA, Expert in Statistics for Innovation in the Directorate of Enterprise Statistics, INSEE

N°	Date	Beneficiary countries and organisations	Type of action	Theme	Location
33	May -16	Turkish NSI	Mission	enterprise groups and profiling	Ankara (Turkey)



33 - Left to right: Mr Can DOGAN, Project Manager, Business Registers, TURKSTAT; Ms Isabelle COLLET, Profiling Expert, INSEE; Ms Rukiye YILMAZ SENTÜRK, Project Manager, Business Registers, TURKSTAT; Ms Agnès TOPIOL-BENSAID, at the time Profiling Expert, INSEE

N°	Date	Beneficiary countries and organisations	Type of action	Theme	Location
34	May -16	Tunisian NSI	Mission	implementation of the national statistical charter and certification of Statistiques Tunisie	Tunis (Tunisia)
35		Tunisian NSI	Visit	organisation of the French statistical system	Paris (France)



35 - Left to right: Mr Raoul DEPOUTOT, at the time Head of the Department of Statistical Coordination and International Relations, INSEE; Ms Mouna ZGOULLI, Tunisian opposite number of the resident counsellor for twinning and Central Director of Dissemination, IT and Coordination, Statistiques Tunisie; M. Hedi SAIDI, Director General of Statistiques Tunisie; Mr Jean-Luc TAVERNIER, Director General of INSEE; Mr Ridha LAHOUEL, Chairman of the Tunisian National Council for Statistics; Ms Sylvie LAGARDE, Director of Methodology, Statistical Coordination and International Relations, INSEE; Mr Ghaieth BETTIBI, advisor to the President's office of the Tunisian government

N°	Date	Beneficiary countries and organisations	Type of action	Theme	Location
36	May -16	Moroccan NSI	Visit	gender inequality	Paris (France)
37		Moroccan Ministry for Industry, Exchange Control Office and NSI	Mission	classifications of activities and products	Rabat (Morocco)
38		Lebanese Finance Ministry	Visit	presentation of INSEE's Economic Outlook Department and its forecasting tools	Paris (France)



38 - Left to right: Ms Gracia RAHI, Economist at the Lebanese Finance Ministry; Mr Gérard BELET, Head of Mission at the French National Audit Office; Ms Jihane OBEID, Economist at the Lebanese Finance Ministry; Ms Rita ACHKAR, Economist at the Lebanese Finance Ministry

N°	Date	Beneficiary countries and organisations	Type of action	Theme	Location
39	May -16	Palestinian NSI	Mission	business registers	Ramallah (Palestine)
40	June -16	Serbian NSI	Mission	peer review and quality	Belgrade (Serbia)
41		Serbian NSI	Mission	national accounts	Belgrade (Serbia)
42		Russian NSI	Mission	statistics of innovation	Moscow (Russia)
43		Afristat and African statistical schools	Workshop	writing scientific articles	Bamako (Mali)
44		NSIs of 10 African countries	Mission	harmonisation of methods for using the ERETES tool	Abidjan (Ivory Coast)
45		Demographers from Burkina Faso, Mali, Senegal and Madagascar	Visit	INSEE's directory for the identification of natural persons and the French official statistical system	Paris (France)



45 - Right, Ms Géraldine DUTHÉ, Researcher at the French National Institute for Demographic Studies (INED), accompanied by young demographers (statisticians or researchers) from Burkina Faso, Senegal, Mali and Madagascar

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