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Project 00047658

„Strengthening the National Statistical System”

MINUTES OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

Venue: National Bureau of Statistics

Date: 24 October 2012, 15:00

Agenda

1. Presentation of the Project's Progress Report for the period of July-September 2012 and discussion on the achievements
 - 1.1. Reporting of progress and activities
 - 1.2. Update on Project Risks and Issues:
 - Activities implemented with certain delays
 - Planning of further assistance in the statistical domain within the new UN partnership framework UN-RM 2013-2017
 - Collaboration with the Romanian Government and the National Institute of Statistics on development of regional statistics for Moldova's decision-makers
2. Presentation and discussion of the Work Plan for the Quarter 4 of 2012
3. Decisions

Participants:

Present Members of the Steering Committee

Government

1. Vitalie Valcov, Deputy General Director of National Bureau of Statistics

UN agencies

2. Alexandru Oprunenco, Portfolio Manager/Policy Specialist, UNDP
3. Galina Corgoja, Program Finance Associate, UN Women
4. Elena Laur, Monitoring & Evaluation Officer, UNICEF
5. Viorel Gorceag, Programme Analyst, UNFPA

Project staff:

6. Aurelia Spataru, Manager of Statistics Project, UNDP
7. Roman Rosca, Assistant of Statistics Project, UNDP

Mr. Vitalie Valcov welcomed the participants at the meeting and presented the main issues of the SC meeting agenda.

1. Presentation of the Project's Progress Report for the period of July-September 2012 and discussion on the achievements (reporter A. Spătaru)

1.1. Reporting of progress and activities

The Steering Committee members took note of the Progress Report, which has been distributed in advance. During the meeting, the main achievements/results within each Project's activities, obtained in the reported period, have been presented briefly.

Among the activities planned for the quarter 3, which were **initiated and finalized**, the following were mentioned:

- Printing of the statistical publication "Education in Republic of Moldova", edition 2012, and its dissemination to C/LPAs, ministries, academia, international organisations, libraries, etc. The electronic version was published on NBS web page;
- Capacity building in reporting procedure on ratified ILO Convention 160 on Labour Statistics;
- Participation of NBS staff at the 3rd meeting of labour statisticians for preparation of the International Conference of labour statisticians from 2013 (2-5 September, Geneva), regional Workshop and Training of knowledge exchange on measurement and monitoring of decent work evolution (27-28 September, Kiev) and UNECE Workshop and joint Work Session on Migration Statistics (16-19 October, Geneva);
- Study mission of specialists from NBS and Civil Registration Service of Moldova to learn from experience of homologous institutions of Romania on vital statistics and civil registration documentation of migrated citizens, Bucharest, 25-28 September;
- Participation at the TransMoNEE workshop - Transformative Monitoring for Enhanced Equity, UNICEF, 11-12 October, Istanbul.

Several activities, initiated earlier but still **in progress**, several carried out with a certain delay, such as:

- *Statistical Survey on Time Use*. By the end of the year the collected data will be verified and validated. Data to be processed, analyzed and disseminated in 2013;
- *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey*, implemented by the National Centre for Public Health. Syntaxes, extension coefficients and data processing program developed. The Analysis of MICS Results Report is to be finalised by end 2013 and disseminated in 2013;
- *Labour Force Migration Survey*. Preparation stage completed, data collection started on 10 October. Data validation, processing and dissemination of results is planned for the mid year of 2013;
- *Analysis of non-responses* within Household Budget Survey for the period 2006-2010. The first estimations were made regarding the impact of the non-responses on the main estimators of HBS. The next phase of the activity will deal with the development of the logistic regression model and adjustment of the weights based on statistical models;
- *Revision of the forms of primary accounting* on labour time and wages for statistical purposes. New structure and revised content of the forms of primary evidence were drafted. The new toolkit would be promoted, approved and implemented only starting with 2013, at the next stage of approval of the questionnaires;

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- *Revision of the toolkit of statistical survey on accidents at work.* Updated concepts and definitions harmonised with the applicable international standards and European norms were drafted to be used for the statistical survey on accidents at work. The new toolkit would be promoted, approved and applied only starting with 2013 year;
- *Revision of the forms of primary accounting on vital events and evaluation of their quality.* Quality evaluation of the micro data on vital events received from the Civil Service and SE Registru by NBS is in progress. By end of October the evaluation should be completed, including recommendations for improvement, as well as an informative note on track of civil registration records. All these will be presented by NBS during a meeting of NCPD.
- *Identify the monitoring indicators for the decentralization process and their impact on population and vulnerable groups.* The developed matrix of indicators, including 61 key indicators being the most relevant for the 7 objectives of the National Decentralization Strategy, was presented to the specialists of Decentralization Policies Department of the State Chancellery, the expert’s evaluation report is to be finalised by end of October and presented by end of November.
- *Elaboration of monitoring framework for operation of Joint Bureaus of Information and Services.* Structure & template to be used for the mapping/inventory of existing gender sensitive statistical indicators in the piloted areas at the regional/local level and Draft questionnaire to measure the use of available statistical data were developed. The activity is implemented with some delay. As the activity is implemented with some delay, the possibility of its finalisation by the end of the year - beginning of 2013 persists.
- *Public opinion poll on data users’ satisfaction with statistics* produced by the National Bureau of Statistics. Questionnaire, methodology and sampling framework were developed together with NBS specialists. In the second half of October the data collection activity is planned.
- *Development and institutionalization of statistical literacy university course for journalists and communication specialists.* The development of the courses’ syllabuses was done with one-month delay. NBS & UN Project team provided comments regarding the content of courses and recommendations for their improvement. The payment of the second instalment is delayed, because the deliverables were not fully submitted by the contractor as stipulated in the Grant Agreement. The course development activity is to be finalised by the end of November, which could be delayed with extension to 2013.
- *Development of an analytical report on the situation of Roma population in the Republic of Moldova.* The initial structure of the future report was drafted, additional data were produced on the basis of UNDP BRC regional survey, national available statistics for comparison purpose, thematic analysis on 7 areas were developed. By the mid of November the thematic reports will be compiled into one single report and presented to beneficiaries and interested persons.

Several activities are at the initial stage of implementation, such as:

- Technical assistance to the preparation of the 2014 Population Census.
V. Valcov informed that NBS has elaborated the Draft Government Decision on implementation of the Population Census Law. Thus, the action plan, the mechanisms for the Law implementation were positively endorsed by the line-ministries, and shortly it is going to be approved by the Government. The National Commission for the 2014 Population Census is to be created. The Commission will be chaired, for the first time ever, by the Prime Minister, thereby the importance of this exercise will be at the highest level. In April 2013, the testing of the Population Census will be conducted.

V. Gorgeag added that the Prime-Minister addressed an official solicitation letter to UNFPA Regional Office according to which the assistance of an international Census Technical Adviser for Moldova is needed during the period of 1 January-31 December 2013. A response from UNFPA Regional Office will come soon regarding the possibilities of hiring the respective expert.
- End of Project Evaluation and Formulation of entry-points for UN future programming in the field of statistics and evidence-based policymaking. The evaluation process for the international and national consultant is in progress.

At the moment of reporting the Project managed to spend 68% from UNDP funds, and 65% from UN Women funds.

1.2. Update on Project Risks and Issues

The update on the **risk** regarding the *sustainability of progress achieved so far which could be loosen once Project's support is withdrawn* referred to the formulation by NBS (41 in total) and line-ministries (23 more) of the list of national needs for future development of statistics. This list includes in total 64 activities and refers to statistical domain, namely: labour market, population and housing census, statistical methods, working conditions, environment, justice and crime, business, demographics, services (transport, tourism), R & D, innovation, foreign investment, industry, prices, national accounts, education, income and expenditure of population, social exclusion, data quality management, social protection. The last on the list, but not last after priority is the need to increase capacity of CPA in statistical data analysis and interpretation in all areas.

The list of **issues** being presented included:

- A. Issues to be solved or issues that require more rigorous monitoring were mentioned:
1. Because some started activities are implemented with certain delays (*see the list of activities under the Risks and Issues part of the Progress Report*), thus their completion may be postponed until the end of the current year or even slightly extended in 2013.
 2. Planning of further assistance in the statistical domain within the new UN partnership framework UN-RM 2013-2017 – requires urgency in actions:
 - NBS formulated 41 needs regarding future development of statistics and received 23 more proposals from CPA institutions;
 - The list of necessities has been analyzed by Project UN Agencies which have manifested their interest towards certain activities;
 - The respective needs will be also examined by the evaluation team of the Project (to be contracted soon) and used for development of the concept of a new assistance project in the field of statistics and evidence-based policy-making within the new UN-RM Partnership Framework 2013-2017.
- B. Issue for information and approval - Collaboration with the Romanian Government and the National Institute of Statistics on development of regional statistics for Moldova’s decision-makers:

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As a result of a joint effort, that, unfortunately, has taken longer than expected, the mini-project document regarding “*Improvement of availability and reliability of regional statistics for Moldova’s decision-makers*”, which is to be financed by Romanian Government with National Institute of Statistics of Romania, has been formulated by the Project team at the request of NBS and on the basis of national counterparts recommendations.

By the mid of October the respective documents were transmitted to NBS and NIS for information and final approval, as well as to the Romanian Embassy in Moldova. After which, the documents will be signed by the implementing parties, and the other counterparts (MRDC, StChan, MInEc) will be informed (within a joint meeting) about launching the activities.

The agreement of NBS and NIS was solicited regarding the developed project documents and launching of activities of this mini-project, which is to be conducted within Joint UN Project on Strengthening the National Statistical System of RM. Confirmative response has been received so far only from INS.

The above-described issues 1-3 required the decision of Joint UN Project Steering Committee regarding the modality of work and finalization of the planned activities in the limits of a new/updated action framework of the project and a no-cost extension of the Memorandum of Understanding with UN Women.

Steering Committee members have discussed the above issues and concluded that, in order to achieve the expected objectives and outcomes, the Project should ensure the finalisation of planned activities, in particular those being already launched, as well as core activities being postponed because of certain /objective circumstances (e.g: *Establishment of a Training Unit sub-ordinate to NBS; Development and institutionalization of statistical literacy university course for public servants, etc.*). This requires an extension of at least half a year of Project’s duration – until end June 2013. In parallel, the Project evaluation will be conducted accompanied by the formulation (taking into consideration the list of priorities formulated by NBS and CPAs) of future programming entry-points (concept note) in the field of statistics and evidence-based policymaking. Such programming priority has been once more confirmed and supported within the recent Strategic Planning Retreat between UN agencies and the Government (22-23 October 2012).

It has been also agreed that the activity on *regional statistics improvement for Moldova’s decision-makers* will start within current UN JP Statistics and will continue in 2013 for the extended half-year period. Meanwhile, before UN Project’s closing, solutions will be identified regarding the further implementation and completion of the mini-project funded by Romanian Government in the second half of 2013.

Given the Project’s extended duration, the Action Plan for the first semester of 2013 will be developed with the support of all counterparts and discussed at the last meeting of the Steering Committee in 2012. The extension decision will be accompanied by a no-cost extension of the MoU with UN Women.

E. Laur and V. Gorceag stated that solutions need to be found in order to use the financial resources budgeted from the agencies’ regular funds by the end of 2012 for activities that will probably not end or take place this year within UN Statistics JP. As it regards the funds and activities for the Project’s extended period (1st semester 2013) and further assistance for the statistics sector (under UNPF 2013-2017) the partner UN Agencies will be available to start planning in November 2012.

2. Presentation and discussion of the Work Plan for the Quarter 4 of 2012 (reporter A. Spătaru)

The presented list of planned activities for the Quarter 4 of 2012 was accepted by the members of Steering Committee of the Project.

3. Decisions

As a result of the discussions being held, the members of the Project’s Steering Committee concluded with the following conclusions and decisions:

1. To agree on:
 - a. Progress Report for the period July-September 2012, including the updates on Risks and Issues;
 - b. Work Plan for quarter 4 of 2012;
2. To approve a half a year extension, until June 30, 2013, of the duration of the Joint UN Project on Strengthening the National Statistical System aiming to complete the planned activities and achieve the expected outputs and outcomes. The NBS and UN Agencies will develop an Activity Work Plan and Budget for the 1st semester 2013.
3. To agree that the activity on *regional statistics improvement for Moldova’s decision-makers* will start within current UN JP Statistics and will continue in 2013 for the extended half-year period. Meanwhile, before the present UN Project’s closing, solutions will be identified regarding the further implementation and completion of the mini-project funded by Romanian Government in the second half of 2013.
4. To undertake a no-cost extension of the MoU with UN Women for half a year.

Signatures of the participants at the meeting:

Vitalie Valcov, Deputy General Director, NBS

Viorel Gorceag, Programme Analyst, UNFPA

Galina Corgoia, Program Finance Associate, UN Women

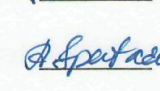
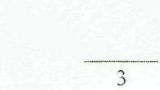




Alexandru Oprunenco, Portfolio manager/Policy Specialist, UNDP

Elena Laur, Monitoring & evaluation Officer, UNICEF

Aurelia Spataru, Statistics Project Manager, UNDP

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Documents enclosed to the present minutes:

- Agenda of the Steering Committee meeting (Rom & Eng)
- Progress Report for July-September, 2012, updates on Risks and Issues (Rom & Eng)
- Funds use report for 2012 Q1-Q3 (Eng) and Activity Work Plan for Q4, 2012 (Eng)
- Description and action plan of the Activity “Improvement of availability and reliability of regional statistics for Moldova’s decision-makers”, financed by Government of Romania (eng)