

Project 00047658
 „Strengthening the National Statistical System”

MINUTES OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

Venue: National Bureau of Statistics

Date: November 24, 2010, 10:00

Agenda

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Participants:

Members of the Steering Committee

Government

1. Vitalie Valcov, Vice-director of the National Bureau of Statistics
2. Oleg Cara, Vice-director of the National Bureau of Statistics, National Project Coordinator
3. Iurii Torcunov, Head of Division for Macroeconomic Analysis and Forecasts, Minister of Economy
4. Tudor Mancas, Aid Coordination Unit, State Chancellery

UN agencies

5. Lovita Ramguttee, Assistant Resident Representative, UNDP Moldova
6. Ulziisuren Jamsran, Gender Advisor, UNIFEM part of UN Women
7. Galina Corgoja, Program Finance Associate, UNIFEM part of UN Women
8. Boris Gilca, Programme Coordinator, UNFPA Moldova
9. Elena Laur, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, UNICEF Moldova

Special invitee - observer:

10. Silas Rapold, Project Officer, Migration & Development Programme, IOM Moldova

The Project Manager welcomed the participants to the meeting, as well as the new member of the Steering Committee – the representative of the State Chancellery, but also presented the main issues of the SC meeting agenda.

1. Presentation of the Project’s Progress Report for the period of August-October 2010 and discussion on the achievements

The main achievements/results within each Project’s activities have been presented in relevant details, which in brief comprise the following:

- 3 international experts/consultants (during their missions in Chisinau) and 4 local consultants provided their expertise as it regards the institutional optimisation of NBS, but mainly the alignment to the international standards on new data collection:

<i>Purpose, expert</i>	<i>Conclusion / Follow-up / Result, timeframe,</i>
1. Optimisation of NBS’s organizational structure, Ilie Dumitrescu, Ilie Dumitrescu, INS Romania, August 10-13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report with recommendations on improvement of structure and basic functions, but also optimization of human resources of NBS and subordinated units provided; • Draft Government Decision on approval of the Regulation (incl.the draft Regulation), structure and personnel number of NBS headquarter (incl.the organigram); • Reallocation/optimization of the existing staff within the system/institution – final expected result;
2. Testing of the Time Use Statistical Survey, Georgeta Istrate, INS Romania, October 25-29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The results of testing & piloting of TUS statistical toolkit were analyzed and advices on fine-tuning of the tested questionnaires and diaries provided. • Public awareness was raised on the utility of the information resulted from TUS and its applicability for the policy-making and general society needs, round-table with participation of 10 representatives of a few line-ministries, State Chancellery and donor organizations.
3. Revision of the statistical infrastructure & toolkit in the field of Research & Development in line with	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review and consultation with the task force (Division of Social Statistics, Division of Statistical Infrastructure and Reports, NBS) and other relevant national stakeholders (Academy of Science, Ministry of Finance) carried out.

the international recommendations, Marek Kwiek, Poland, November 2-5

4. Fine-tuning of the matrix of ICT statistical indicators for e-development analysis

5. Expertise of the UNICA statistical survey toolkit, Anatol Graur, MD

6. Survey on "Violence against women in family", Ion Amarfii, Valentina Bodrug-Lungu, Natalia Vladicescu MD

- respective evaluation report - *is expected by the end of November 2010*;
- a comprehensive list of indicators for e-development analysis provided to national stakeholders, being harmonized with the latest international standards and best practices in e-development, and taking into consideration the available capacities of the Republic of Moldova to collect the respective relevant statistics.
- On the basis of the list of indicators, a memorandum will be proposed for consideration of and signature by the official authorities, who participate in the e-development monitoring, on segregation of their responsibilities for the collection, production and dissemination of e-development indicators – *by mid December 2010*.
- 13 working meetings with the staff of 5 divisions of NBS carried out;
- short-term statistical indicators by fields of economy (industry, constructions, agriculture, trade, services) and pertinent methodological notes brought in correspondence with the national legal and accounting framework and international standards, but also inter-linkage between sectors ensured;
- The questionnaire will be tested in the field, and the UNICA will be presented to data users and potential respondents – *by mid December 2010*;
- Software application for processing of collected data and cross-tabulation of output tables/indicators designed;
- qualitative data collection carried out within a series of 7 focus-groups and in-depth interviews, report on analysis of results shared with UNFPA consultant (T.Shikoska);
- data processed and zero draft of analysis report developed – *in December-January 2010*.

- National capacities on data production were strengthened and availability of disaggregated data increased:

<i>Topic, consultant, partner instit.</i>	<i>Participants, results, timeframe</i>
1. Statistical Survey "Violence against women in family" (implemented by NBS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1116 questionnaires collected; • Extension coefficients applied over the collected data; • Co-relations among variables determined;
2. Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (implemented by the National Center for Public Health in close cooperation with NBS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memorandum of Understanding has been developed, coordinated with the State Chancellery and the Ministry of Health and is under finalisation for endorsement. • Project Document has been signed and work on methodological issues: adaptation of Questionnaires and sample design etc. has been started - <i>by the beginning of 2011</i>; • Membership of the Inter-sectorial Steering and Technical Committees is currently clarified parties;
3. Statistical survey on Child Labour (implemented by NBS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The results of the Survey have been publicly presented; Audience (58 persons) consisted of representatives of line-ministries, members of the coordinating committee on elimination of child labour in RM, academia, civil society, media; • In-depth analytical analysis of the collected data performed by the ILO international consultant, report translated into Romanian, laid-out and prepared for publishing - <i>by mid December 2010</i>;
4. "Crisis Monitoring at community Level" (implemented by Idis Viitorul)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The third report on crisis impact at local level produced and shared with counterparts; • training of local operators and LPAs, next phase of focus-groups (40-45 pers), 3 regional meetings with LPA carried out; • forth data collection completed and reflected in the final report – <i>by mid December 2010</i>;
5. "Aging of the population of the Republic of Moldova" (NBS is participating)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping of available statistical data undertaken; Additional, missing, data collected; • Experience on applied methodologies and data collection exchange in the framework of an international conference (participants: 15 CIS countries and local experts); • Quantitative data supplemented by qualitative data and analysis developed - <i>by April 2011</i>;
6. DevInfo (implemented by MoEcon)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MDG indicators updated with 2009 data and disseminated via DevInfo. • Information for calculation of Small Area Deprivation Indexes collected at the community level, compiled from other sources, processed, calculated by domains; SADI dissemination via DevInfo – <i>by end of 2010</i>;
7. Improvement of mechanism of data collection on children in institutions and alternative child care services (implemented by MoLSPF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of existing system of data collection on children in institution and alternative services performed; • Respective data collection tools developed and tested – <i>by end of 2010</i>;
8. Consolidation of the Network of NBS interviewers participating in households surveys (implemented by NBS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 interviewers, hired during 2010 (as a result of rotation yearly applied in the framework of HBS and LFS), trained; • Five NBS observers, who passed the Training of Trainers in 2009, joined the team of NBS trainers and were offered the opportunity to apply their trainers' skills in practice; • 18 staff (central & rayon statistical sections) trained to carry out the testing of the TUS statistical toolkit;

- Capacities of data producers to share their results with data users and capacities of users to properly benefit of those results were build and consolidated:

<i>Topic, consultant, partner instit.</i>	<i>Participants, results, timeframe,</i>
1. Improvement of statistical metadata on MDG indicators, phase 2, Ion Pirtachi, MD (NBS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metadata for at least 8 statistical fields (uncovered in phase 1) and 26 core statistical indicators derived from national MDGs (under the responsibility of NBS), will be produced and published on the NBS web page – <i>by end of 2010</i>;
2. TransMONEE data base update and Country Analytical Report on the situation of women (NBS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • data collection completed and fitted to the Regional TransMONEE database; • pertinent country analytical report is under finalization – <i>by beginning of December 2010 (one month delay)</i>;
3. Policy monitoring framework in education (MoEduc., State Univer.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • monitoring framework for the Consolidated strategy on Education improved; • key indicators and time series identified, metadata described – <i>by the end of 2010</i>;
4. First global celebration of achievements of the official statistics (NBS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government Decision for proclaiming the national Statistician's Day on October 20 approved; • Celebration ceremony with participation of high-level officials, partner institutions, donors, statisticians held; • Promotional materials disseminated;
5. Policy Research component (MoHealth, MoLSPF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • last 2 analytical reports (on the health status of the population and on the labour in rural area through gender perspective), developed on the basis of available official statistics, were launched and disseminated to beneficiary institutions and other data users to be used by them in the evidence-based policy making;

Additional details on progress achieved in the reported period were reflected in the *enclosed* progress report. The members of the Committee have agreed on the content of the respective document and presentation.

Additional outstanding issues regarding the reported progress have been raised and discussed, including:

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Response , feedback, actions to mitigate the impact</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delays on certain activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - data collection on Violence against Women (delayed by 1,5 months) which caused delays in reporting by NBS of the first tranche transferred for the implementation of the respective Survey and the postponing of final report development by UNFPA expert (L. Ramguttee) - Development by NBS of TRANSMonee analytical report (1 month delay) (E.Laur) - Development of metadata on MDGs indicators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Data collection by NBS delayed because of longer period necessary for the creation of the mobile groups of interviewers – some of them refused to participate during the data collection in the field and had to be replaced; (A.Spataru) ➢ Troublesome process of payment through Treasury/MoFin. to the persons involved in data collection; (A.Spataru) ➢ NBS was requested to put effort and report the tranche as soon as possible, so that the second tranche is possible to be paid this year; (L.Ramguttee) ➢ NBS was requested to speed up the development of the respective report; (E.Laur)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crucial need to use the key findings/ indicators on Violence against Women during the 16 days of activism against gender based violence campaign (U. Jamsran) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ As long as a summary/basic information of the survey on VAW conducted by NBS has been already disseminated via the UNECE website (in the framework of the Second Expert Group Meeting on Measuring Violence against Women, Geneva, 18-19 Nov.2010), the key indicators could be released by NBS and provided to UNIFEM&UNFPA to be used during the mentioned campaign. Also, the advice was to pay attention how these data will be used as they could not be comparable with other previous surveys mainly because of differences in applied methodologies, samples, etc. (V.Valcov&O.Cara).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An amount of \$26,900 are still lacking in the estimated budget necessary for the implementation of Time Use Survey (A.Spataru) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Given importance of this activity, the huge process involved in the TUS preparation and the amount of work already undertaken in this area, important that additional efforts to mobilize the additional funds needed to complete this activity be envisaged in the near future, If no additional funds are foreseen for the remaining sub-activities, we may need to consider reprioritizing the ongoing support and committed funds (L.Ramguttee) ➢ The results of the TUS (processing of data) should be performed by the end of the 3rd quarter 2012; (V.Valcov)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starting of works/activities on MICS survey (E.Laur) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ The Project Document has been signed with the National Centre of Public Health, while the signature of the Memorandum of Understanding with the State Chancellery, MoHealth should be soon undertaken, but the progress will also depend in the active and timely participation of NBS and other partners. Also, permanent coordination with the Global MICS team and UNICEF Regional Office will be carried out at each stage (adaptation of Questionnaires, sampling, data processing etc.) in order to ensure high quality standards and international comparability Support has been received from SDC. Additional funds from WHO/EU will be discussed during forthcoming EU mission in Moldova (December 2010). WB also will be approached for possible co-funding (E.Laur); ➢ UNFPA is also going to support MICS (B.Gilca);

- Ownership over the Piloted UNDP & UNICEF & UNIFEM Project "Crisis monitoring on community level" (L.Ramguttee)
 - A lot of information and data has been gathered as well as important analysis in the 10 piloted communities but so far, may not have received the necessary attention as we all wanted. Now that we are reaching towards the end of supporting this initiative, there was a suggestion to the State Chancellery to convene a special meeting at the beginning of the next year to take stock on what has been achieved, type of data generated, to see the usefulness of this instrument for the government (including the quickness and regularity of generated data, functioning as a complementary tool for LPAs), but mostly important what types of institutionalization options can be envisaged. It was noted that the need for such an instrument was confirmed in October 2009 by the Ministry of Local Administration which signed the project document with the UN agencies, functions of which have now been overtaken by the State Chancellery) (L.Ramguttee supported by UNIFEM and UNICEF);
 - Maybe one option of solving this issue is to involve/make it through the UNDP Local Development Programme, Local Governance Component, and Decentralization Department from the State Chancellery which already started to make use of those data during the local governance initiatives; (U. Jamsran).
 - The interest from the CPAs is available (representatives of the MoEcon have always participated at the presentations of results, read elaborated report), but it was not formalized so far – that would be the issue to be solved the formalization of the need of this instrument (I.Torcunov) ;
 - The impact of the data collection and of the obtained results should be assessed, but also the identification of the groups/categories of users to indeed use in practice those data remains as issues to be discussed (V.Valcov)
- Implication of other UN agencies in DevInfo development and support (E.Laur)
 - The respective support should be considered by all UN agencies and maintained during the next phase of the Project. It is important that the Government ownership and access to data for evidence-based policy are ensured. (E.Laur);
- Launching of the NHDR on social exclusion
 - Two options: i) ideally it could take place this year, in the week of 13th December 2010 or a week after; or ii) launched beginning of next year given UNDP already launched the NHDR on climate change for 2009/2010 and the regional HDR on social exclusion, whereby Moldova is featured as a case study along with other 5 countries, will equally be launched in 2011 (L.Ramguttee).

2. Presentation of the Work Plan for the next period – November-December 2010

The activities to be finalized and the results to be achieved by the end of 2010 were presented in parallel with the mentioned progress report (see above), but also as an additional document enclosed in the handouts (see enclosed). The members of the Committee had no objections on the activities to be fulfilled by the end of 2010.

3. Discussions on the formalisation of the Joint Statistics Project extension for 2011-2012

The Amendment to the Project Document (of the on-going Joint Project) as of 2007 has been developed in the first half of the year and in the second half of the year consulted in a few stages (and proposed adjustments considered) with all the participating UN agencies, including UNICEF who has joined in 2009, and ILO which expressed and confirmed their interest and readiness to join the Statistics Project in the next phase; equally, the amended document has been extensively consulted with the National Bureau of Statistics, as the main implementing national partner, and the State Chancellery as the main coordinator of the technical assistance in the country.

This amendment outlines entry points for the continuation of the on-going joint project "Strengthening the National Statistical System 2007-2010" in the period 2011-2012, extending the timing of it and activities and adding new partners.

The respective amendment is aimed to re-arrange the activities and inputs already/previously agreed which do not involve significant changes in the results of the Project. Last two of three components (data production, data dissemination, data use) of the joint project will be merged.

The objective of the next phase of the joint project for the period 2011-2012 is to continue to support, through technical assistance, high quality and reliable statistical data production and use for evidence-based policy design and monitoring into sustainable institutional structures.

Key areas that require further support in the next phase of the joint project and that have received less attention in the previous project are:

- Further harmonization with EU statistical requirements;
- Technical preparation and general awareness and acceptance of the upcoming population and housing census in 2013;
- Fostering of better cooperation, coordination and quality mechanisms between NBS and other data producers (central and local public authorities responsible for official and administrative data);
- Institutionalization of capacity building and training to continuously upgrade skills of staff from NBS, including strengthening capacities of NBS deconcentrated services to produce multi-dimensional disaggregated data(to be checked with NBS), and increase statistical literacy and monitoring and evaluation skills of line ministries, local authorities and civil society organizations.

Total estimated <u>budget</u> :	1,647,051 USD	Sources of funded budget:	• UNIFEM (pooled)	313,615 USD	
Out of which:		• Government	N/A	• UNFPA (parallel)	106,000 USD
1. Funded Budget:	1,048,615 USD	• UNDP Regular	250,000 USD	• UNICEF(parallel)	327,000 USD
2. Unfunded budget:	598,436 USD	• UNDP BRC/MDG (pooled)	30,000 USD	• ILO (parallel)	22,000 USD.

(L.Ramguttee) The endorsement of the presented extension documents (including amendment to ProDoc, annual actions plan for 2011 and 2012) was tabled to the Board members so that the proposed amendment can be signed by

all involved parties by the end of current week, or the latest end of November 2010 – this is more so critical critical in view of the fact that UNIFEM who is one of the biggest donor in the Project, has to finalise all necessary documentation in view of committing funds to this project. The Project Board being the formal body whereby strategic decisions are taken and approved by board members, this is therefore the fora to agree and endorse the project extension along with the various amended documents – to be reflected through signature of the minutes of the meeting by the Board members

(*T.Mancas*) The head of the Division for Policies, Strategic Planning and External Assistance, of the State Chancellery, Ruslan Codreanu, has provided his comments on the proposed amendment which have been taken into consideration by the Project team. Providing its comments the Chancellery took care that the respective document also contains the necessary main information which is usually requested to be available in the case of technical assistance projects, as for example the formulation of the main objective, correlation of activities with the expected results. Activity 5.3 on Enhancing capacity of Policy Analysis, Monitoring and Evaluations units in the line ministries in elaboration of policy-monitoring framework through usage of evidence based data is welcomed by the State Chancellery.

Regarding the final risk mentioned in the amendment regarding the importance of the key role played by NBS in the coordination of the statistical sector, it is worth mentioning that according to the decision of NBS as of 22/02/2010 the membership of the *Sector Coordination Council* has been approved. So, the functioning of this Council, governed by the Regulation approved through the Government Decision nr. 12 as of 19/01/2010, should be activated as soon as possible which will provide the support on which the Project team (UN agencies and NBS) is counting so much.

The inter-sectorial coordination can be ensured by the invitation in the council of representatives of different sectors as well. The main donor in the sector could even co-chair the Council.

(*O.Cara*) NBS will soon make an update of the mentioned internal decision regarding the membership of the Sector Coordination Council in order to review it.

(*L.Ramguttee*) Because in the next phase, many line-ministries are going to also benefit of the Project's support, besides the NBS which is already deeply involved in the coordination of the whole process, the presence of the State Chancellery in all Project Board meeting would be much appreciated, also in view of ensuring a stronger coordination with the Project management to make sure that line-ministries are on time and fully involved in the activities planned for support.

As it regards the involvement of the State Chancellery in the formalization of the Project extension, according to the recent official communication with R.Codreanu, the State Chancellery welcomes NBS as signatory to the Amendment to the Project Document, being the main implementer of the Project's activities, along with participating UN agencies. On the other hand, there was a suggestion that the State Chancellery representative be present not only during all Project Board meetings for this project henceforth but also is actively involved in the various consultations which will take place within the remit of the project. Given the specific mandate of the State Chancellery as coordinator of all external assistance to the country, it is suggested that an official letter from the UN to the State Chancellery informing of the extension of the project be considered as official communiqué to the State Chancellery.

(*V.Valcov*) The positive impact of the assistance already provided to NBS by the on-going UN Joint Project has been reiterated by NBS management. The modality of joint assistance is confirmed by NBS as being one of the most efficient and resultant. Therefore the continuation of the respective support for the further consolidation of the national statistical system is very much appreciated and welcomed.

(*O.Cara*) Because the next phase of the UN Joint Project is more focused on the social sector of statistics, it would be good if in parallel new funds are raised, donors attracted, for the supplementation of the support for other fields of statistics of big importance such as economic and macroeconomic statistics, regional development (e.g.regional GDP). The IT side of the statistical development has been less covered by donors in the past, but it is crucial to start investing in this component as well.

(*L.Ramguttee*) For such a purpose of complementing the existing/available assistance it is more than crucial to have the Sector Coordination Councils established as soon as possibly in view of better understanding which donors envisage to provide support to / are already supporting which areas in the statistical field and also, an opportunity for resource mobilisation.

(*U. Jamsran*) In the above context the possibility to build synergy between this Project with the DFID Project on regional development which is finishing its activity but is available to continue their support through other donors. Also, technical support could be considered from the new e-Governance Project implemented with EU support.

Representatives of the participating UN agencies stressed once again the need to sign the Project extension documents by the end the current week or, the latest, by the end of November 2010.

4. Presentation of the Work Plan for 2011

Activity Work Plan for the 2011 (see *attached*) has been in advance coordinated and consulted with the UN agencies, NBS and State Chancellery, which approval has been therefore confirmed by the participants at the meeting.

Decisions

As a result of the discussions held, the members of the Steering Committee formulated the following decisions & recommendations:

1. To approve the Project's Progress Report for August-October 2010;
2. To approve the Activity Work Plan for November-December 2010;
3. To approve the Annual Action Work Plan for 2011;
4. To endorse the proposed (and previously consulted with all participants) Amendment to the Project Document as of 2007, and its Annex, for the extension during 2011-2012¹ of the duration of the Joint UN Project on "Strengthening the National Statistical System of RM" and official joining of UNICEF and ILO;
5. The Amendment to the Project Document should be signed by the National Bureau of Statistics, as the main Government Implementing partner, and all participating agencies (UNDP, UNIFEM, UNICEF, UNFPA, ILO) by the end of November 2010 the latest;
6. To approve the joining of the State Chancellery as the permanent member of the Project's Steering Committee.

Signatures of the participants at the meeting:

Vitalie Valcov, Vice-director of the National Bureau of Statistics

Oleg Cara, Vice-director of the National Bureau of Statistics, National Project Coordinator

Iurii Torcunov, Head of Division for Macroeconomic Analysis and Forecasts, Minister of Economy

Tudor Mancas, Aid Coordination Unit, State Chancellery

Lovita Ramguttee, Assistant Resident Representative, UNDP Moldova

Ulziisuren Jamsran, Gender Advisor, UNIFEM part of UN Women

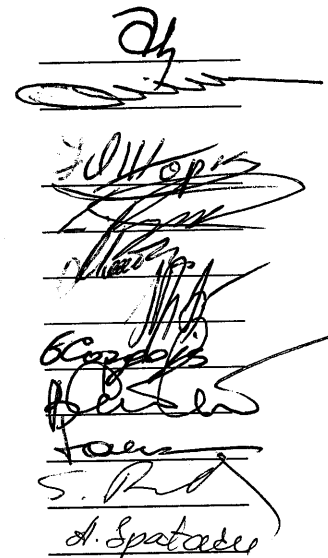
Galina Corgoja, Program Finance Associate, UNIFEM part of UN Women

Boris Gilca, Programme Coordinator, UNFPA Moldova

Elena Laur, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, UNICEF Moldova

Silas Rapold, Project Officer, Migration & Development Programme, IOM Moldova

Aurelia Spataru, Project Manager, UNDP Moldova



Documents enclosed to the present minutes:

- Agenda of the Steering Committee meeting
- Progress Report for August-October, 2010
- Project Work Plan for November-December 2010
- Amendment to Project Document for the extension of the Project's duration in 2011-2012 and its Annex (WAP 2011-2012)
- Annual Work Plan for 2011
- Correspondence on the consultation process with the UN agencies, NBS and the State Chancellery regarding the mentioned Amendment and AWP 2011-2012.

¹ May be extended beyond 2013 – it remains subject to further discussion as appropriate.