

Newsletter 2025

International Consulting News



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Introduction

Statistics Finland is an active member of the international statistical community. We are committed to complying with the international codes of conduct, quality criteria and recommendations for the development, production and dissemination of statistics. Statistics Finland also takes part in knowledge sharing in different domains and supports statistical capacity development in partner countries. This newsletter contains a selection from our activities in the last two years.

Highlights:

- Statistics Finland participated in eight international consultancy projects or stand-alone activities in 2023 and in nine projects or stand-alone activities in 2024.
- The consultancy days abroad of Statistics Finland's short-term experts totalled 142 working days in 2023 and 174 working days in 2024
- A full-time resident twinning adviser has been on-site in Tblisi since the end of April 2024, marking the start of the Twinning Project in Georgia led by Statistics Finland.
- In 2023 and 2024, Statistics Finland hosted seven in-person study visits from different countries and organisations and usually lasting from half a day to three days.





Kick-off event of the Twinning Project in Sarajevo in April 2024.

EU Enlargement and Neighbourhood Countries

Bosnia-Herzegovina

Continuation of activities to improve the statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)

In 2023 and 2024, Statistics Finland participated – and currently participates – as a Junior Member State in the EU Twinning Projects “Further support to the reform of statistics system in BiH” (2021-2023) and “EU for further development of statistics system in BiH” (2024-2026).

The aim of the ongoing Twinning Project is strengthening the statistical system’s institutional capacities and to further harmonise statistics in BiH with the EU acquis and standards, ultimately resulting in more quality, reliable and internationally comparable data for all users. Both projects made significant progress in the field of official statistics in Bosnia and Herzegovina. They were and are led by Statistics Denmark.

Contributing to strengthening the capacities of statistical institutions in several areas

Several Statistics Finland experts have taken part in implementing the project in the fields of the statistical business register, use of administrative data in population and social statistics as well as business statistics, information society statistics and indicators of living conditions. In collaboration with experts from other EU member countries the projects have also succeeded in improving the alignment of macroeconomic statistics in Bosnia and Herzegovina with the EU acquis, as well as increasing the number of indicators and data in the areas of business statistics.

In particular, Statistics Finland experts have acted as component leaders in initiating activities for using data from administrative sources for statistical purposes and in the balance of payments statistics component of the projects. We also had the pleasure of hosting two study visits of the management and experts from the statistical institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina for deepening their knowledge of the policies and practices in use in Finland.

Multi-beneficiary Statistical Cooperation with IPA countries

During 2023, Statistics Finland participated as a member of the consortium in the EU IPA (Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance) 2019 Multi-beneficiary Statistical Cooperation Programme project. It provided expertise in statistical projects on price statistics – HICP (Harmonized Indices of Consumer Prices) as well as environmental accounts and forestry.

Statistics Finland experts conducted technical assistance missions in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo. We also organised and hosted a regional workshop attended by fourteen participants from Western Balkan countries and Türkiye.



Workshop on environmental accounts taking place in Helsinki in May 2023.

Georgia

Launch of the Twinning Project in Georgia

The EU Twinning Project "Further Strengthening of the Georgian Statistical System" was launched in April 2024 with a planned implementation period of 24 months. It has a budget of MEUR 1.2. The project is carried out by a consortium led by Statistics Finland with the Federal Statistical Office of Germany (Destatis) and the Italian National Institute of Statistics (Istat) as Junior Partners.

The overall objective of the project is to strengthen the capacity of the National Statistical System of Georgia for legislative approximation and implementation of the Association Agreement in the field of statistics. The specific objective of the project is to assist the National Statistics Office of Georgia (Geostat) in enhancing methodological soundness in standards and classifications, developing demographic and population statistics as well as strengthening the capacity of government institutions for the production and use of official statistics.

More specifically, this Twinning Project aims to

1. Transform Geostat into a process-oriented production system known as GSBPM.
2. Introduce the EU-NUTS classification in Georgia to enhance regional and municipal statistics.
3. Oversee the implementation of the quality management system and the adoption of the self-assessment survey based on DESAP.
4. Commence the activities regarding establishing the Population Register in Georgia.
5. Develop a methodology for population projections.
6. Create and enforce robust policies, methods and regulations for the utilisation of administrative data in statistical analysis.
7. Produce statistical data that support informed decision-making by ensuring Geostat and other data owners collaborate to meet user needs.

Resident Twinning Advisor as the backbone

The Resident Twinning Advisor (RTA) from Statistics Finland has been working on-site in Tbilisi since April 2024. In 2024, he coordinated eight expert missions with participants from one or more Member States and organised two Steering Committee meetings.

As usual, the Rolling Work Plan has been elaborated, STEs identified from all consortium countries and missions carried out. The activities implemented

have consisted of conducting training courses for the Geostat staff, sharing of experiences and MS best practices, facilitating hands-on group work, practical sessions, e.g. on modelling, as well inventorying adequate data sources. A seminar for administrative data providers and stakeholders in Georgia was also organised.

“It has been touching how warmly I have been welcomed at Geostat since I arrived. I am also impressed by the high level of professionalism among the Geostat staff involved in Twinning activities. Additionally, the commitment of top management has been crucial for the successful implementation of the project. This is a learning process for every participant and also a great opportunity for Member States’ Short-Term Experts to deepen their expertise in their specific fields of statistics,” summarises RTA Marko Ylitalo from Statistics Finland.



RTA Marko Ylitalo (in the middle) welcomes and appreciates short-term experts’ input to achieve Twinning Project objectives.

Jordan

Statistics Finland is an implementing partner in the ongoing EU-funded Twinning Project (2022-2025) aiming at strengthening the capacity of Jordan's Department of Statistics in terms of compilation, analysis and reporting of statistical data in line with International and European best practices statistics. The project is led by Statistics Denmark.

Statistics Finland has participated in the Twinning Project by consulting on building the national statistical register(s): SBR, Population register and Address register as well as standardised data and metadata. It has introduced some best practices for the National Data Centre aiming to provide data to all users groups according to their need and detailed microdata allowing decision makers to carry out detailed analyses. Furthermore, in the context of ensuring constant and reliable data sources and robust statistical systems that contribute to timely and informed policy making, Statistics Finland's experts contributed to developing PxWeb as a tool for dissemination of statistics and economic surveys.



The development of the SBR being essential to integrating different data sources was a key takeaway from the study visit to Statistics Finland that took place in October 2023.



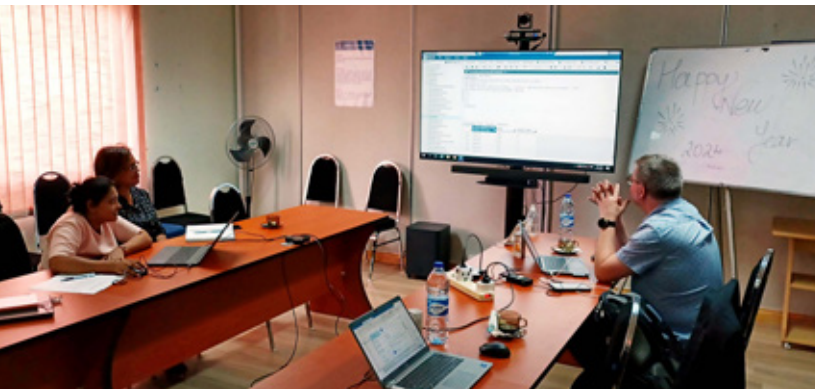
The EU TAIEX event centred around supporting reform processes on data management and governance in Mongolia.

International Partnerships

Data Management and Governance addressed in TAIEX workshop in Mongolia

A three-day EU TAIEX workshop on Data Management and Governance was held in Ulaanbaatar in September 2023. It brought together a wide range of stakeholders from the Mongolian administration and the administration of Finland, Poland and Spain. Peer to peer advice, exchange of expertise, best practices and lessons learnt on data policy, management and operations were covered during the workshop.

In their presentations Statistics Finland experts focused on national data strategy development and its main foundation, best practices for developing effective data policies and strategies as well as data stewardship concepts, its implementation, challenges and lessons learnt.



During the mission in Port Louis in February 2024 Statistics Finland experts presented key concepts and indicators for Business Demography, STS and SBS statistical production

Pan-African Statistics II Programme: deepening collaboration with African NSOs

Shared commitment to advancing statistical capacity in Africa

Statistics Finland is a member of the consortiums in both ECOBUSAF and SOCSTAF projects (2021 – 2025) taking place in the frame of the EU-funded Pan-African Statistics (PAS II) Programme to support the capacity-development of selected national statistical offices of the African Statistical System (ASS).

Statistics Finland’s experts have contributed to the activities taking place in the form of joint webinars and study visits for the development of statis-

tical business registers (SBR) in Mauritius, Namibia and Senegal. Cooperation between Statistics Finland and Statistics Mauritius on the statistical business register was launched in April 2023 with an emphasis on the statistical business register, its development needs and areas to be improved further during the project life cycle. The subsequent activities focused on furthering cooperation with administrative data suppliers; e.g. the tax authority and their business register and presenting the EU best practices for statistical production of Short-term Business Statistics (STS) and Structural Business Statistics (SBS).

Launching a series of workshops with NBS Nigeria

The first training workshop with the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in Abuja in September 2023 as part of the PAS II projects focused on selected aspects of dissemination and communication of statistics. The concrete topics encompassed statistical production and dissemination process, release practices and platforms and good practices of data visualisation. Furthermore, development of media relations and social media strategy in promoting the use of statistical information were discussed.

The training workshop in February 2024 focused on harnessing administrative data, experimental statistics and effective data ecosystems. Presentations



Representatives from INSEE France, Statistics Poland, Statistics Denmark, INE Spain and Statistics Norway attended the PAS II projects coordination meeting hosted by Statistics Finland in September 2024 .

In the workshop held at Statistics House in Abuja in February 2024 valuable insights for future improvements were gained with regard to approaches in collecting administrative statistics data as well as leveraging technology like big data and web scraping.

and practical sessions covered topics like machine learning operations (MLOps) and enhancing data understanding among users. The exchange of experiences and best practices between the two countries proved invaluable in identifying areas for improvement.

The workshop on new data sources and the statistical business register was held at NBS Nigeria in October 2024. It successfully combined training, informative presentations and workshop discussions to share good practices and solve problems. The key takeaways were a robust SBR regarded as crucial for factoring both formal and informal activities and improving the timeliness of business data. It was concluded that ML and modern estimation methodologies can facilitate merging difficult data sources and treating missing data. The training sessions demonstrated the cross-cutting applicability of machine learning techniques in both business and social statistics. Furthermore, the discussions highlighted the importance of collaborative networks and data provider partnerships in leveraging machine learning to address challenges faced by national statistical offices.



The opening event of the first PAS II workshop in September 2023 was attended by the Finnish Ambassador to Nigeria and the Statistician General of Nigeria.



Key focus areas in the training held in October 2024 consisted of developing and maintaining the Statistical Business Register and innovative methodologies such as machine learning (ML) for processing large datasets and integrating multiple data sources to produce statistics.

Nordic countries and international development cooperation

The Nordic countries have a long tradition of cooperation on statistics, which also holds true for international development cooperation. In the last few years, the national statistical offices of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden have increased collaboration in supporting the development of sustainable national statistical systems. The mutual bilateral agreements signed so far to mobilise staff from each other for international development cooperation make it possible to draw on a larger team of experts and easier to share experiences across the Nordic countries.

As an example of Nordic cooperation leading to more joint work consultants from Statistics Finland carried out a training workshop in March 2023 on a dissemination platform for the Regional Economic Community IGAD with the focus on the PxWeb dissemination system in the frame of the Swedish international development project. Moreover, Statistics Finland's experts conducted two missions in 2024 to support the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics in the development of satellite accounts for household production with teams from Sweden and Finland working together.



Px Training for IGAD: Statistics Finland experts giving training in dissemination course for the Regional Economic Community IGAD in March 2023.



Rethinking of statistical literacy teaching

Jukka Hoffrén

Photo credit: Kari Likonen

Engaging NSO experts to promote accurate and effective communication and use of data

Today people around the world can easily access statistical information from several new sources and even use open-source statistical databases. Global data revolution, new technologies and digitisation as well as new and innovative sources of information have transformed the world of facts and the learning environment around young people, in particular.

In an emerging new information society the success of the economy requires employees to be able to acquire new data and apply it to challenges more efficiently. All this makes the ability to read and use statistics and more broadly, data, into an important new citizen skill. Beside wider dissemination of produced statistics, it is today more crucial than ever that users find the produced trusted data useful and also know how to use the data.

But not all data and their interpretations can be trusted. In many cases people need help in distinguishing trusted data, and here the experts of NSOs are the best instructors and teachers. Thus, it is essential to engage NSO experts to promote accurate and effective communication and use of data and pass these skills on to educational institutions, for instance. The practical means to teach and disseminate statistical literacy requires further considerations, adaptations and development. Important themes are how to increase student motivation towards statistics, compilation of learning contents aimed at effective learning and passing them to education professionals. This is a task

on which we at Statistics Finland intend to delve deeper by developing an interactive digital statistics literacy course during 2025.

Promoting statistical literacy also has many advantages for NSOs. It raises a positive public image and position of NSOs, educates future data users and data providers as well as helps to widen data dissemination. Training the employees of NSOs to promote statistical literacy has been part of the EU-funded Azerbaijan Twinning Project (2020-2022) and Pan-African Statistics (PAS) II project activities in Nigeria (2023-2025), for instance.

SDGs statistical literacy challenge

Evidence based decision-making requires understanding and interpretation of statistical data, careful use of data in planning and implementation of evidence-based decisions. The European Union also strongly supports evidence-based decision-making in EU-funded statistical projects. Special challenges for statistical literacy competencies are the UN's Sustainable Development Goals that strive to respond to global challenges. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a complex system of goals, targets and monitoring metrics and their interconnections, present the need for more comprehensive statistical literacy skills.

For the 2030 Agenda to be successful, all stakeholders, from governments to citizens, should have competencies to understand, evaluate critically, use and apply statistical SDG information produced to make informed actions. SDGs also expand statistical literacy skills to the evaluation of non-traditional data sources and datasets, thus increasing needs for even more comprehensive statistical literacy skills.

PILLARS	DIMENSIONS				
Data Use (User Types)	Legislature	Executive	Civil Society	Academia	International Bodies
Data Services (Service Types)	Quality of Data Releases	Richness & Openness of Online Access	Effectiveness of Advisory & Analytical Services Related to Statistics		Availability & Use of Data Services
Data Products (Topics)	Social (SDG 1-6)	Economic (SDG 7-12)	Environmental (SDG 13-15)		Institution (SDG 16-17)
Data Sources	Statistical Office (Censuses & Surveys)		Administrative Data	Geospatial Data	Private Sector Data/Citizen Generated Data
Data Infrastructure	Legislation & Governance	Standards & Methods	Skills	Partnership	Finance (Domestically & From Donors)

Finnish statistics ecosystem is ranked high in global performance indicators

The Statistical Performance Indicators is a service provided by the World Bank. The indicators measure the capacity and maturity of national statistical systems by assessing the use of data, the quality of services, the coverage of topics, the sources of information, and the infrastructure and availability of resources. For the past three years, Finland has been among the top performers.

Put simply, the statistical performance of economies is defined by how well, how broadly and how frequently national statistical systems collect, produce and disseminate high-quality data in a publicly accessible manner.

The set of indicators contains 51 indicators to assess performance organised according to five pillars: data use, data services, data products, data sources and data infrastructure. Finland scores high in all pillars. Statistics Finland's data production and its quality are based on existing Finnish registers and other data sources, as well as continuous dialogue with registry office staff and data users. Good cooperation with our stakeholders is a necessity.



Statistics Finland's organisational contact details

The contact point for international consulting and technical cooperation is Statistics Finland's Partnerships and Ecosystem Relations service area:

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