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Outputs 1b1.1 and 1b1.2:

Assessment of the current situation in agricultural statistics, SFR quality and methodology and TA programs, and

Assessment of the inter-institutional communication and reporting protocols in the area of Agricultural statistics

Dragan Vukmirović


Republika e Shqipërisë
Instituti i Statistikave

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PROJECT REFERENCES

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REPORT OVERVIEW

| | |
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| Project: | Support to the Improvement of Statistical Information System |
| Component: | Component 1 - Redesign and improve corporate statistical business processes and enhance institutional capacities in the production and usage of Agricultural and Labour Force statistics |
| Sub-component: | Sub-component 1b. Enhance institutional capacities in the production and usage of Agricultural statistics |
| Activity: | ACTIVITY 1b.1 Assessment of the actual situation of Agriculture Statistics in Albania |
| Sub-activities: | 1b.1.1: Assessment of the current situation in agricultural statistics, SFR quality and methodology and TA programs 1b.1.2: Assessment of the inter-institutional communication and reporting protocols in the area of Agricultural statistics 1b.1.3: Study visit to EU member states with good experience on key indicators required from EU member states 1a.1.4: Reports preparation |
| Outputs: | 1b.1.1: Report: Assessment of the current situation in agricultural statistics, SFR quality and methodology and TA programs 1b.1.2: Report: Assessment of the inter-institutional communication and reporting protocols in the area of Agricultural statistics |
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CONCLUSIONS

This report is output of the project Support to the Improvement of Statistical Information System (AL/IPA2013/03) (Project): 1b.1.1: Report: Assessment of the current situation in agricultural statistics, SFR quality and methodology and TA programs and 1b.1.2: Report: Assessment of the inter-institutional communication and reporting protocols in the area of Agricultural statistics. The report was prepared using various existing documents provided by INSTAT and using external sources and following planned activities, objectives and scope of the project. All the information was gathered in consultations with INSTAT representatives and in respect to their requirements and expectations.

The overall finding from this report show that further analyzes is needed for understanding the overall situation of the agricultural statistics in Albanian statistical system.

Assessment of the current situation in agricultural statistics, SFR quality and methodology and TA programs

The Official Statistics Programme (OSP) defines the competent institutions for the generation and distribution of official statistics and time frames for the agricultural statistics according the Law¹.

Up to 2012 the main agricultural statistics was produced by the Ministry of Agriculture Rural Development and Water Administration (MARDWA).

2012: INSTAT took over the responsibility for the production of Agriculture statistics from MARDWA.

A new directory for Agriculture statistics at INSTAT was put into service and Agriculture Statistics Directory organized into five sectors:

- Sector of Soil and Crop Production Statistics,
- Sector of Livestock and Fishery Statistics,
- Sector of Environment and Forest Statistics
- Price Sector
- Sector of Management Survey.

2012: Agricultural Census (AC). The Agricultural Census was supported by technical assistance from EU IPA 2007 project and the technical working group was composed by INSTAT staff and Ministry of Agriculture staff.

The agricultural units to be surveyed have been listed by using three different data sources:

¹ Law No. 9180, dated 05.02.2004 "On official statistics"



1. The **Population and Housing Census (PHC)** 2011 that included a few questions about agricultural activities. The PHC is regarded successful - the under coverage is between 4 and 5 %, which is regarded as a normal level compared to other countries.
2. **Agricultural units from the Business register.** Among the big farms, around 3.500, only 218 fulfill the area criteria (more than 10 hectares). They have 4769 hectares of arable land, which is around 1.2 % of the arable land in Albania. The Business register and the list of big farms are regularly updated.
3. The **list of big farms** (more than 10 hectares of agricultural land, more than 8 cows etc.) from MARDWA.

2012: Post Enumeration Survey for AC (PES) conducted by INSTAT (with the support of the technical assistance from EU IPA 2007) was followed AC. The PES included 44 enumeration areas with a total of 2204 units which were interviewed by appointed enumerators that were not involved in the Agricultural Census.

- The statistical results from the AC differ significant from corresponding results from other data sources. Especially the Annual Agricultural Survey (AAS) carried out by the MARDWA until 2012 and carried out by INSTAT in 2013. ASS should give results at the same level concerning land categories, crop areas and the number of livestock.
- Consequently the statistical farm register has not been finalized.

Conclusion: The discovered discrepancies between the AC results and administrative data need to be assessed and analyzed.

2013: AAS carried out by INSTAT in 2013. The results are differing significantly from previous MARDWAs time-series. Because of these discrepancies no results have been published yet from the AAS 2013. For the same reason no AAS has been performed for 2014 and 2015.

Methodological clarification: The Annual Agricultural Survey (ASS) carried out by the MARDWA until 2012 was a combination of a statistical survey and administrative information. No written documentation of the methods were available at INSTAT. INSTAT conducted the AAS in 2013 (AAS 2013) as a sample survey with the farm register based on the AC as the frame. Methodological experts from EU assisted in the sampling design.

The figures published by INSTAT for 2013, 2014 and 2015 are still based on surveys produced by MARDWA.

- Starting with 2013, MARDWA did not use the Area sampling frame method for the AAS - Data collection was done by expert estimations and the number of collected indicators decreased.

2014: Agricultural Annual Survey (AAS 2014) is not realized

2015 (January): According a Government decision (Decision of Council of Ministers No. 53/21.01.2015 "For performing some statistical activities by the Ministry of



agriculture, rural development and water management, for implementation of official statistics 2012-2016 programme”) it was decided that parts of the agricultural statistics should be transferred back to MARDWA i.e. realization of the field work data collection and data elaboration under the methodological supervision of INSTAT. The idea is to set up a working group with representatives from MARDWA and INSTAT with the object to agree on their roles in the Albanian statistical system (AAS).

Through this decision INSTAT staff will be diminished by 20 persons (within the plan for MARDWA staff will be increased with 20 persons to create a structure for achieving expected results for the statistical purposes).

Agriculture and Environment Statistics Directory now is organized in INSTAT into three main units with 6 employees:

- Land and Crop Production Statistics Unit,
- Livestock and fishery and Environment Statistics Unit,
- Economic Account on Agriculture and Environment Unit.

The decision also mentioned that funds needed to be transferred from INSTAT to MARDWA for 27 staff that MARDWA should hire for the statistical sector and regional directories for the data collection and coordination. The transfer of funds was realized in February 2015.

2015 (January – February): Two short-term missions were carried out with the focus on analyzing the discrepancies between the AC and administrative sources². Comparisons between the AC and the MARDWA results confirm big discrepancies for crops and relatively smaller discrepancies for livestock. These discrepancies are systematic, around the same level for all prefectures. Consultants note: “There are clear signals but no available information to fully confirm that the agricultural land in the MARDWA results is over estimated”. They underline those results from two data sources (MARDWA and AC) with results are different in such a serious way, that any kind of calibration of AC based on the MARDWA is not realistic.

2015: Agricultural Annual Survey (AAS 2015) is not realized.

2016 (March): A Memorandum of Understanding in the field of statistics between INSTAT and Ministry of Agriculture was signed in 2016. On the basis of this agreement, INSTAT and MARDWA secure the data exchange produced within the scope of respective institutional statistical activities. For the production of official statistics, MARDWA has obligation to transmit to INSTAT the data and the results included in the OSP which shall serve for the production of official statistics and key indicators such as those of the contribution of agriculture to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Also, INSTAT is given the right of access to administrative data at the macro level or at the level that is required for the production of these statistical indicators. MARDWA shall guarantee the availability of the human and financial

² SIDA project funded, Assistance in the development of Agriculture Statistics, Agricultural Census assessment, 19 01- 23 01 2015 and 23 February- 27 February, 2015



resources necessary for the implementation of activities envisaged in this Memorandum.

2016 (06 June): The IPA 2013 Project Support to the Improvement of Statistical Information System was started. During the inception phase INSTAT and MARDWA proposed conducting the two surveys which have to contribute in reduction of existing discrepancies between the data obtained through the Agricultural census and administrative data provided by the MARDWA. Those two surveys are: Agriculture Census Calibration (Village Survey) and Annual Agriculture Survey (AAS). This request caused the changes in the project activities related to this sub-component.

2016 (27 June - 1 July 2016): Two short-term, ad-hoc missions were carried under IPA 2014 Multi-beneficiary statistical cooperation programme³. The objective of the missions was to prepare plan of activities which would results in:

- Calibration of AC data,
- Publication of AC data,
- Implementation of Annual Agricultural Survey 2016 (AAS 2016).

2016 (November): INSTAT continue its work related to the two surveys in the domain of the sampling:

- AAS - INSTAT has prepared the sample for the Annual Agricultural Survey (which will be implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture). This sample has been prepared for year 2014 but not used at the time. It is to be used now updated only with the Big Farms created after AC 2012.
- Calibration survey - support is provided throwing the Project. Sampling frame is PHC and AC 2012.

Assessment of the inter-institutional communication and reporting protocols in the area of Agricultural statistics

A Memorandum of Understanding in the field of statistics (Memorandum) between INSTAT and MARDWA (Partners) was signed in March 2016. For the implementation of the present Memorandum, a working groups (WG) responsible for the coordination of activities between the Parties was established

The present WG:

- Consist of (at least) 8 members selected in agreement by the two heads of the institutions, ensuring equal participation of both Parties;
- Co-chaired by one representative of INSTAT and one representative of MARDWA;
- Shall convene the last Friday of each month in the premises of both institutions alternately and at any time requested by either Party;

³ Pilot Projects: PP 21 – Annual Crop Statistics and PP 22 – Animal Production (joint mission)



- May invite in its meetings experts or officials not pertaining to the Parties, for particular topics of discussion;
- At the conclusion of each meeting, shall formulate the written minutes with topics addressed, positions of the Parties and decisions taken;
- Regularly inform the heads of both institutions on the meetings and potential proposals.

Duties of the WG:

- Conduct the planned activities and check at each phase that outcomes match the stated objectives;
- Identify causes that hamper the full achievement of the expected outcomes and take actions to improve the situation;
- Present proposals to relevant institutions to solve problems, including modifications to the memorandum and/or annexes forming an integral part of it;
- Coordinate tasks related to the publication of the Agriculture Annual Yearbook, including outcome assessment, estimation of final indicators and limitation of copyright for both institutions;
 - o Elaborate the plan of tables for publication;
 - o Data analysis;
 - o Level of publication;
 - o First year data (year t) to be baseline data;
 - o Initial data publication on web as baseline data;
 - o Final data to be published in the year (t+2) after obtaining the preliminary results of the upcoming year t+1.
- Propose specific initiatives for professional enhancement of statisticians through joint training courses, long-term and short term participation in partner organisations or other national organisations, participation in conferences, seminars and any other events dealing with statistics;
- Initiate research and study projects on particular issues of mutual interest aimed at consolidating the research basis of the statistical outcomes carried out by both institutions;
- Oversee and check correct implementation of point 6 of the Memorandum.

Obligations between the Parties

INSTAT and MARDWA shall cooperate for definitions and technical & methodological aspects related to statistical surveys within the scope of this Memorandum.

INSTAT shall support MARDWA with:

- Methodology for the surveys (determine all statistical definitions, classifications and nomenclatures) in the official statistics, in line with Article 7(ë) of the Law,
- Issue standard professional guidelines to be followed by all statistical agencies in the production of official statistics, in accordance with Article 8/1(a).



- Training of MARDWA staff at local and central levels,
- Software for data entry and processing.

MARDWA shall ensure collection, entry, clearing, check and processing of any statistical data under INSTAT's methodological supervision. After completion of the above-cited processes, MARDWA shall transmit the data to INSTAT for publication.

MARDWA and INSTAT shall share data generated within their respective institutional scope, in order to conduct the statistical activities forming the object of the present Memorandum. The Parties to this Memorandum shall process the data in full conformity with the confidentiality rules laid down in Article 15 of the Law.

- MARDWA shall make available to INSTAT the registers, data and outcomes envisaged in the OSP. INSTAT shall be conferred the right to access to administrative data at micro level or those levels necessary for the generation of statistics, upon a prior written request.
- INSTAT shall send to MARDWA the data related to exports & imports of agricultural and livestock products.

Data accessed or shared by the Parties may have a final or preliminary form (as the case might be). In any case, such form shall be expressly stated in the document.

Ensuring proper implementation of the programme

MARDWA shall seek INSTAT's consent prior to any statistical survey envisaged to be conducted under its authority. INSTAT shall provide its opinion on the project within six calendar weeks from receiving notification. If a reply is not provided within this time frame, the consent to the project shall be considered as given.

Procedures governing data production by MARDWA or any other institution under its authority shall be examined by INSTAT. For INSTAT to fulfil this obligation, it must be provided with all the necessary documentation and relevant registers on time, as provided for in Article 13/1 of the Law. INSTAT shall specify the information it needs within a reasonable timeline.

Upon a request by INSTAT, MARDWA shall provide information on the progress of tasks envisaged in the OSP.

Deadlines for data sharing shall be no longer than 45 days in advance of the date set out in the OSP for their publication by INSTAT.

Ongoing activities

Preliminary discussions within the WG took place and covered procedures, activities, time-plans:



- The methodology and questionnaire of the AAS were transmitted by INSTAT for observations and proposals to MARDWA in March 2015. MARDWA have to send feedback on the survey instruments to INSTAT.
- **The sample** for the Annual Agricultural Survey will be drawn up **by INSTAT**, after updating 2012 AC database with administrative records coming from MARDWA.
- **Enumerators** will be **hired by MARDWA** and will be **trained by MARDWA** staff involved in statistical activity at central and local level.
- **Data collection and data processing** will be done **by MARDWA**, which will undertake all procedures related to data processing: data entry, data editing, data imputations and data validation.
- **Rules for logical control** are to be provided **by INSTAT**;
- **MARDWA** must deliver to INSTAT the **cleaned database** of the survey results.
- **Calibration of the AC, Data tabulation and analysis, Preparation of the publication with main results, quality report and meta data reporting, Preparation of publication for AAS 2016 and as Recalculation of the time-series (2010-2016)** will be done **by INSTAT** and **Preparation of publication with revised time-series**.
- Other surveys, according to the methodology developed in future by INSTAT, will pass through the same process: Data collection and data processing (including data entry) will be carried out by MARDWA and data tabulation and data dissemination will be carried out by INSTAT.

DESCRIPTION OF REPORT OBJECTIVES

Objectives:

The main objective of the sub-component is to assist INSTAT in stabilizing the situation with respect to Agriculture statistics in the country and in setting up the production of a full set of agricultural statistics, in line with the European requirements, in its work programmes. To that regard the Consultants shall firstly make a thorough analysis of the actual situation together with an inventory of the scheduled related TA programmes. Subsequently an overall long-term development path and an action plan for the two years project implementation has to be set out, targeted to solve prevailing deficiencies, to improve the various existing processes, and to expand the work programme with new sub-domains, like those in the field of land use, and fishery.

The project shall actively participate in the action plan, complementary to the assistance provided by other projects. Technical assistance will cover the establishment of durable inter-institutional arrangements, the streamlining of processes and data flows, support to the introduction of improved methodologies for



the various Agriculture Statistics, aligned to the EU acquis in statistics and following the European quality mechanisms.

Sustainability of institutional capacity building is seen as an important precondition for a proper component execution. Comprehensive outputs with detailed recommendations for a follow-up strategy are in this case also indispensable with a view to the long-term development path.

Expected results related with the Activity 1b.1 is formalized as Output 1b.1.1: Report: Assessment of the current situation in agricultural statistics, SFR quality and methodology and TA programs and Output 1b.1.2: Report: Assessment of the inter-institutional communication and reporting protocols in the area of Agricultural statistics.

BACKGROUND

INSTAT conducted the Agricultural Census in October 2012, but publication of final results has been delayed because of discrepancies with administrative data provided by the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Water Administration (MARDWA).

The transfer of responsibilities for agricultural statistics from the MARDWA to INSTAT in 2013 has led to discontinuities in the production and publication of the MARDWA statistics. The Ministry transferred its procedures, knowledge and data files, but those were not fully compatible with the requirements and standards of the EU acquis in statistics and had to be reviewed and revised accordingly.

Comparative analysis showed that the outcomes of the Agricultural Census of October 2012 were deviating from the historic data from the Ministry. Since Statistical Farm Register (SFR) suffered of insufficient quality because Register was used for the sample frame, no data have been published until the end of 2014. The political pressure to find definitive solutions for the stalemate is evidently high.

However, apart from the existing doubts about the quality of the sampling frame to be used, there is also the practical issue which choice has to be made about the organisation of the data collection in the field. Negotiations have been initiated with the Ministry to intensify the cooperative arrangements and assign its regional staff for the statistical data collection, because of their experience in the sector and their knowledge of the local circumstances in the field.

A Memorandum of Understanding in the field of statistics between INSTAT and Ministry of Agriculture was signed in March 2016. On the basis of this agreement, INSTAT and MARDWA secure the data exchange produced within the scope of respective institutional statistical activities. For the production of official statistics, MARDWA has obligation to transmit to INSTAT the data and the results included in the OSP which shall serve for the production of official statistics and key indicators such as those of the contribution of agriculture to the Gross Domestic Product. Also,



INSTAT is given the right of access to administrative data at the macro level or at the level that is required for the production of these statistical indicators.

During the inception phase INSTAT and MARDWA proposed conducting the two surveys which have to contribute in reduction of existing discrepancies between the data obtained through the Agricultural census and administrative data provided by the MARDWA. Those two surveys are: Agriculture Census calibration (Village Survey) and Annual Agriculture Survey (AAS). This request caused the changes in the project activities related to this sub-component.

Since justification for introduction of these two surveys is a kind of gap analysis, instead of planned activities “Statistical Gaps exercise”, Support for alignment with the European requirements and Engagement and inter institutional support programme on concepts and data needs for the Agricultural statistics (page 62 to 64 of The Annex III Organisation and Methodology) we introduced a new activity: **Activity 1b2. Technical assistance and expertise for Agriculture Census calibration (Village Survey) and Annual Agriculture Survey (AAS) 2016.**

These changes also influenced the starting time and duration of the activities under the Sub-component 1b: From month 3 to month 14.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The methodological approach for creating this Report was based on four planned sub-activities.

- 1b.1.1: Assessment of the current situation in agricultural statistics, SFR quality and methodology and TA programs
- 1b.1.2: Assessment of the inter-institutional communication and reporting protocols in the area of Agricultural statistics
- 1b.1.3: Study visit to EU member states with good experience on key indicators required from EU member states
- 1b.1.4: Report preparation

Activity 1b.1.3: Study visit to EU member states with good experience on key indicators required from EU member states is postponed for the next year at the request of INSTAT and its implementation had no impact on the preparation of this report.

The first step was to review the Input documents and other necessary information:

- Law No. 9180, dated 05.02.2004 “On official statistics”
- Official Statistics Programme for the period 2012-2016
- Memorandum Of Understanding, Between Institute of statistics (hereinafter referred to as “INSTAT” and Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Water Administration (acting as a Statistical Agency and hereinafter referred



to as “MARDWA” Pursuant to the Law No. 9180, dated 05.02.2004 “On official statistics”, as amended, particularly (Article 8, point 1, letter k), the Decision of the Assembly of Albania No. 3/2013, dated 14.02.2013 “On the approval of the Official Statistics Programme 2012-2016” and the Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 53, dated 21.01.2015 “ On conduct of some statistical activities by the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Water Administration for the implementation of the Official Statistics Programme 2012-2016”.

- SIDA project funded, Assistance in the development of Agriculture Statistics, Agricultural Census assessment, Report from a mission to the INSTAT, 19 01- 23 01 2015 by Rolf Selander
- SIDA project funded, Assistance in the development of Agriculture Statistics, Agricultural Census assessment, Report from a mission to the INSTAT, Report from second mission to the INSTAT 23 February- 27 February, 2015 by Henrik Engström and Rolf Selander
- IPA 2014 Multi-beneficiary statistical cooperation programme, Pilot Projects: PP 21 – Annual Crop Statistics and PP 22 – Animal Production (joint mission, 27 June – 1 July 2016 by Irena Orešnik and Mariana Toteva
- Project TCP/ALB/3503: Implementation of the Inter-sectoral strategy for agriculture and rural development in Albania 2014-2020, DRAFT Mission reports number CT01: November 2015 to number CT01: 27 – 30 of June 2016 Crina Turtoi, FAO consultant
- List of regulations at national level
- List of regulations at European and global level
- List with description of inter-institutional reporting protocols
- List of internal and inter-institutional processes

Furthermore, consultation with INSTAT staff, SIDA representatives, and FAO experts regarding the current situation in the field of Agriculture statistics in INSTAT and MARDWA were conducted.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES:

Support will be provided towards further improvement of agricultural statistics addressed to:

- Develop a long-term development plan in reaching the compliance with European requirements and meeting the national needs in the field of Agricultural Statistics, as well as a 2-year action plan for addressing high priority improvements and expansions in collaboration with other relevant institutions and donors;
- Provide technical expertise advice about inter-institutional arrangements for the post census activities and the production of Agriculture statistics;
- Technical assistants and expertise for Agriculture Census calibration



(Village Survey) and AAS 2016

- Provide technical assistance for the evaluation of the SFR, updating of the SFR or if necessary propose new measures for a new SFR or Census with an action plan and steps to be taken. If necessary expertise and action plan in questionnaires design, and methodologies will be provided;
- Provide expertise advice and technical assistance for the Farm Structure Survey (FSS); includes the design of questionnaires.
- Provide expertise advice and technical assistance for preparation methodological materials for FADN (Farm Accountancy Data Network), through inter-institutional arrangements and collaboration;
- Provide technical assistance to the compilation methodology of agricultural accounts;
- Assist with users' engagements with aim of better understanding of Agriculture Statistics and increased confidence in the quality of the statistics.

This document is an input for upcoming Project activities to be undertaken in the sub-component 1a Redesign and improve corporate statistical business processes, Tasks 2 to 5 and sub-component 1b. under Component 1 and finally for the IT systems developments as identified under Component 2.



ANNEX 1. ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

List of abbreviations and acronyms, included in the report.

AAS - Annual Agricultural Survey

AAS 2012 - Annual Agricultural Survey 2012

AAS 2013 - Annual Agricultural Survey 2013

AAS 2014 - Annual Agricultural Survey 2014

AAS 2015 - Annual Agricultural Survey 2015

AAS 2016 - Annual Agricultural Survey 2016

AC - Agricultural Census

FADN - Farm Accountancy Data Network

FSS - Farm Structure Survey

EU – European Union

GDP - Gross Domestic Product

INSTAT - Institute of Statistics of Albania

IPA - Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance

MARDWA - Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Water Administration

OSP - Official Statistics Programme

PES - Post Enumeration Survey

PHC - Population and Housing Census

PP - Pilot Project

SFR – Statistical Farm Register

SIDA – Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

WG - Working Group