Output 3.1.3:

Recommendation on the repositioning of INSTAT in the Albanian statistical system

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Contents

PROJECT REFERENCES

Project reference number	Europe Aid/136334/IH/SER/AL
Project title	Support to the Improvement of Statistical Information System
Contract number	AL/IPA2013/03
Location	Albania
Contractor	The project is implemented by the consortium who is composed by ASCENTA IT SERVICES SRL and IN2 Croatia
Contracting Authority	Central Finance and Contracting Unit (CFCU) within the Ministry of Finance
Beneficiary	The national statistical institution of Albania (INSTAT)
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Project duration	24 months

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REPORT OVERVIEW

Project:	Support to the Improvement of Statistical Information System
Component:	**Component 3** - Strengthen communication function and statistical coordination role of INSTAT with focus on dissemination, and quality management
Sub-component:	**Sub-component 3.1:** Support INSTAT in strengthening its position in the Albanian Statistical System
Activity:	3.1 Assessment of the current position of INSTAT and the inter-institutional relations in the Albanian statistical system
Output:	3.1.2: Recommendation on the repositioning of INSTAT in the Albanian statistical system
Expert:	Iris Bakllamaja
Date of report:	30th of November 2017
Venue:	Tirana, Albania

DESCRIPTION OF REPORT OBJECTIVES

Objectives:

With regard to the Communications Component objectives to:

1. Strengthen the position of INSTAT in the Albanian Statistical System including improved engagements with producers of official statistics and with the users
2. Upgrade capacities, capabilities, and structures for modern public relations for dissemination and presentation of statistical information based on a modern dissemination strategy;
3. Achieve sound practices, procedures and systems for meta data management, developed and implemented in INSTAT, covering all stages of the statistical processes and facilitating internal and external data exchanges and communications, including coordination;

The main objective of this report is to:

4. Recommendations for the repositioning of INSTAT in the Albanian Statistical System

Expected results for the sub-component 3.1:

Recommendations on the repositioning of INSTAT in the Albanian Statistical System, will be the basis for building and implementing a strategy to strengthen institutional capacities in internal and external communication which shall include:

1. The creation of a new modern Dissemination Policy & Communication Strategy
2. Assisting with the elaboration and implementation of policies and operational plans for communication
3. Developing of mass-media relations
4. Designing of campaigns to make statistics and their role embraced by users
5. Supporting the establishment and operations of regular statistics users' platforms
6. Supporting the designing and production of professional promotional materials
7. Supporting the upgrading and completion of data dissemination practices, metadata production and quality dimensions' standardization of the dissemination data
8. Training staff to ensure quality standards in the dissemination activity

BACKGROUND

The report is related to the work within the IPA 2013 Project: Support to the Improvement of Statistical Information System (Project). Project is conceptualized into three main components with large number of activities, sub-activities and tasks having a different degree of complexity and largely depending on a number of various factors, of internal and external nature.

Component 3 - Strengthen communication function and statistical coordination role of INSTAT with focus on dissemination and quality management.

The activities to be performed during the Project have been singled out according to the objectives of the Project and were further defined according to discussions made during the meetings with the beneficiary's - INSTAT nominated experts. The institutional framework provides solid background, so that the project is managed in an efficient and transparent way at high professional level and respecting existing legislation.

This report, Recommendation on the repositioning of INSTAT in the Albanian statistical system (draft)***,*** is an output 3.1.2 for the:

- **Component 3:** Strengthen communication function and statistical coordination role of INSTAT with focus on dissemination, and quality management
  - **Sub-component 3.1:** Support INSTAT in strengthening its position in the Albanian Statistical System
  - **Activity 3.1:** Assessment of the current position of INSTAT and the inter-institutional relations in the Albanian statistical system

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the assessment of the current status of INSTAT communications and inter-institutional relations from the dissemination perspective, a list of recommendations is provided in this report that will be the basis for the fulfillment of this mission.

STRENGTHENING RELATIONSHIPS WITH STAKEHOLDERS

Defining stakeholders in 3 main categories where segments identified overlap within various categories, helps to categorize for better analysis and identification of improvements in communication and engaging with them.

Therefore, for each category the following recommendations are made to be considered in the drafting and implementation phase of the Dissemination & communication strategy.

User focused main recommendations include:

- Continue yearly User Satisfaction Survey
- Knowledge Forums with users such as Local Governments, Businesses, Media and Students
- Study visits abroad with Media

Producer focused main recommendations include:

- Seminar & workshops on European standards of statistical production
- Roundtables with high Authorities
- Fairs & Exhibition Participation:
    - Labor Fair,
    - Agriculture Fair

Internal focused main recommendations include:

- Open Talk Sessions with internal staff
- Continued yearly Satisfaction surveys with staff
- Team Building activities

DISSEMINATION PRACTICES

A modern Dissemination Strategy & Communications should be developed as per this project's mission, in order to provide solid path towards strengthening INSTAT image and communication overall.

- **Distributed with Metadata** – most of official statistics are distributed with metadata and explanations to avoid misinterpretations and misuse, however improvements must be made to cover all statistical distributions.

- **Comments on misinterpretation, misuse and criticism** – Article 7 (para 2d) of the Law "On Official Statistics" requires INSTAT to facilitate "a correct interpretation of data in official statistics" and while INSTAT does not have a formal policy about commenting on criticism and misuse of official statistics, it is common practice that such comments are made on case-by-case basis. A formal policy should be drafted.

- **Price policy** – as per the Statistical Act, official statistics are free to the public and anyone can access them through the website and custom-designed outputs and analyses requested by users, are not allowed to be charged any payment. Physical publications are distributed to subscribers and no pricing policy is in place. A pricing policy should be officially drafted.

- **Design & Layout meets SE guidelines –** Printed Publications have started to comply to Eurostat Graphical Style Guide, however no Brand Guideline exists for INSTAT to follow and strengthen its visual image. Therefore, it is recommended that a Brand Platform be designed and implemented.

- **Quality** should be strengthened with the drafting of the Quality policy and regulation all encompassing.

  - Regular communication about the level of quality in all areas of statistics should be further enforced. As per LPR – 15 recommendations, there is still a need to strengthen awareness about quality among other important producers of official statistics.

  - Relevance indicator should be further enforced by continuing the yearly User Satisfaction Survey, analysis of Request for Information database, analysis of the website and social media insights, and the execution of the Dissemination Survey.

  - Accuracy & Reliability should be enhanced through the Quality regulation to be drafted.

  - Timeliness & Punctuality of dissemination should be compliant to European standards to include publication of yearly Calendar 3 months in advance and releases at the set time of 08:00, which should be part of the Dissemination Policy.

  - Coherence & Comparability should be further enforced through the Quality regulation to be drafted.

  - Accessibility and Clarity shall be further enhanced with the drafting of the Dissemination & Communication strategy.

- **Metadata Management** should be further enhanced with the continuous upgrading of the quality standards and reporting.

COMMUNICATION PRACTICES

Communication activities need to start with a yearly strategy that will be followed through a well planned Action Plan.

Publications are recommended to improve in their layout and content. To ensure professional content, expert editorial service must be provided. For visual brand uniformity, experts must be contracted long-term to provide consistent and efficient delivery. Campaigns should be planned around important publications.

Media relations are recommended to be organized through a structured communications plan in order to maximize the effects of current and new activities to be proposed in the strategy. Pillars of Media relations should be enforced through well planned content categories.

Digital Media as a key communication axes should be given priority in the proper development of digital communications. It is recommended that a well planned social media strategy to include popular channels, branding and designed content responsive to each channel, should be done through experts in digital communication to be contracted.

Stakeholder Engagement activities are recommended to be well planned through the drafting of the communication strategy to achieve consistency that will bring about improved relations, increased knowledge and usage of statistics. A Calendar of activities for each stakeholder group should be planned to encompass all stakeholders.

Internal Communications should bee seen as multi dimensional to include not only work related but also team building activities, which will improve the social environment and increase productivity overall. Therefore, it is recommended that team building activities should be organized to include all level of staff and informal work meetings to be organized quarterly to increase the efficiency of information sharing. The intranet to be developed under SIDA project during 2018 will bring much needed improvement in the internal processes.

Brand Platform, as a starting point to building image perception of a strong brand, is lacking in INSTAT. Therefore, it is recommended that a Brand platform and guideline must be developed as a key activity in improving the communications and achieving the objectives of INSTAT and this mission.

Campaigns are an important part to touch a wide audience and send your messages across. It is recommended that well planned campaigns should be part of the communication strategy and implemented through contracted expertise for proper and efficient impact.

Customer Service Management As customer service is a major part of building stronger relations with current stakeholders, now that social media has become a major channel of communication, it is recommended that a dedicated customer service & community management position be created.

Infrastructure to support Dissemination & Communication Strategy should receive special attention if this mission to develop modern Dissemination & Communication strategy to strengthen INSTAT image and relations in NSS, is to

succeed. It is detrimental that proper positions are created to support the need for improvements under this mission. Positions needed should include Editorial expert or further training of current staff, Digital specialist to manage the development of digital communication, Events specialist to support the increased number of events for stakeholder engagements. Contracted expertise are needed such as communication agency to provide Brand platform development, visual applications and strategic digital communications.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The methodological approach for creating this Report was based on planed activity 3.1: Assessment of the current position of INSTAT and the inter-institutional relations in the Albanian statistical system.

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

1.   Project output 3.1.1: Current status o INSTAT, inter-institutional relations, communication, metadata system and data quality from the dissemination activities perspective
2.   Law no. 9180, dated 05.02.2004 "official statistics",
3.   Official Statistics Programme for the period 2017-2021(OSP2017-2021)
4.   INSTAT Mission Statement
5.   Light Peer Review of the Implementation of the European Statistics Code of P ractice in the Republic of Albania - Final Report, 2014 (LPR 13)
6.   Report on Limited Peer Review of the Institute of Statistics of Albania, 2015 (LPR 15),
7.   Adapted Global Assessment of the National Statistical System of Albania
8.   Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS)
9.   European Statistics Code of Practice
10. Statistical requirements Compendium of Eurostat 2017 Edition
11. Quality reports and definitions
12. Manuals of procedures and regulations of various INSTAT units.

Second step: Consultation with INSTAT staff of Publication & Dissemination of Information unit, Database and Metadata management unit, Quality Statistics unit and Quality Coordinator unit.

Third step: Analysis of report on consultation with stakeholders in other institutions which provide administrative data to INSTAT with emphasis on the dissemination capacities and the overall relations.

Final step: Draft report preparation

ANNEX 1. ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ASS - Albanian Statistical System

BoA - Bank of Albania

CFCU - Central Finance and Contracting Unit

Compendium - The Statistical requirements compendium

ESS - European Statistical System

EC – European Commission

EU – European Union

ESMS - Euro SDMX Metadata Structure

ESQRS - ESS Standard Quality Reporting Structure

ICT – Information Communication Technology

IMF - International Monetary Fund

INSTAT - Institute of Statistics of Albania

IPA - Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance

LPR – 13 - Light Peer Review of the Implementation of the European Statistics Code of Practice in the Republic of Albania – Final Report, 2014

LPR – 15 - Report on Limited Peer Review of the Institute of Statistics of Albania, 2015

MoF - Ministry of Finance

MoU - Memorandum of Understanding

NSI - National Statistical Institute

NSP - National Statistics Program 2017-2021

NSS - National Statistical System

ONA - Other National Authority (for statistical production)

PDIU – Publication & Dissemination of Information Unit

SDDS – Special Data Dissemination Standard

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