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Standing Committee on Regional and Urban Statistics

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Regional statistics in transition and developing countries: lessons learnt from technical assistance

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devstat

Development of **Statistics**. **Statistics** for **Development**.

Technical Assistance in Statistics

- Reliable data are the cornerstone of evidence-based decision making, and in particular at the regional and local levels;
- The **availability** and **proper use** of quality statistics is a pre-requisite for democratic societies;
- Data and statistics are attracting more resources and new donors, but support remains insufficient. More and better-quality financial support to data and statistics is vital to ensure robust SDG monitoring at national level (Paris 21, PRESS 2017).

"Data are the lifeblood of decision-making and the raw material for accountability"
'A World that Counts', UN Data Revolution for Sustainable Development

Technical Assistance in Statistics

- TA in statistics focuses on capacity building for official statistics, implying a series of **interrelated activities**, covering economic, social and environmental statistics and indicators;
- Areas of TA to Statistics (Paris 21, PRESS 2017):
  - Strategic and managerial issues of official statistics at national and international level;
  - General statistical items and methodology of data collection, processing, dissemination and analysis;
  - Environment and multi-domain statistics;
  - Economic statistics;
  - Demographic and social statistics.
- In transition and developing countries, regional and local statistics are in need of improvement:
  - to continue the modernisation of statistical processes;
  - to monitor SDGs at sub-national levels ("Leave no one behind").

‘Regionalisation’ of TA in statistics in transition and developing countries

- TA in organisation of statistical systems must consider regional structures inherited from past practice and poorer infrastructure:
  - Small, under-staffed statistical offices at low geographical levels (e.g. rayons in post-Soviet countries);
  - Limited IT (access to Internet, modern hardware and software, skills, etc.).
- Limited number of statistics users outside capital cities:
  - Dissemination of statistics mostly done in HQ (e.g. paper publications);
  - Weaker presence of universities and research centres in regions.
- Statistical production not fit for geographical detail:
  - Small sample sizes due to budget restrictions;
  - Focus on country-level macroeconomic and social data for reporting to international organisations (e.g. IMF, WB, UN agencies).

DevStat's experience in regional and local statistics in developing and transition countries

- EuropeAid - Improvement of Regional Statistics in the Republic of Moldova (2014 – 2017);
- EuropeAid - Technical Assistance to the Central Administration of Statistics (CAS) Lebanon (2015 – 2018): social indicators
- World Bank - National Statistics Development Strategy (2016 – 2018): regional accounts, IT tools for local offices
- EuropeAid - Elaboration of a Strategy for the Development of Regional Statistics in Tunisia (2015)
- GIZ + EU + other bilateral agencies - Monitoring Regional Development in Ukraine: Support to regional development policies

Regional Statistics and Regional Development

Business case:

- The need for regional statistics is generally formulated in the context of regional development plans or strategies, as a consequence of perceived increasing regional disparities and the need to provide preferential support to problematic regions; users needs
- Describing regional disparities is constrained by the availability of regional data (e.g. regional accounts, regionalised social indicators, etc.)
- Almost all transition and developing countries have prepared some kind of regional development concept or plan; though the analytical capacity is weak in local agencies

Lessons learnt

- Define a realistic ***set of monitoring and target indicators*** that can be disaggregated at geographical level, considering the cost of developing methodology and data collection:
  - Understand the trade-off between geographical accuracy and relevance
- Bring together the demand and the supply for regional and local statistics:
  - Strengthen and institutionalise the ***role of NSIs in the process of preparing and monitoring regional development policies***
  - Create ***statistical literacy in user institutions,*** especially at regional and local level;
  - Involve statisticians in regional and local offices in the ***dialogue with users***;
  - Involve regional governments in ***statistical councils.***
- Focus the TA to statistics producers on over-arching operations for regionalisation of data, such as ***regional accounts*** and ***localising SDGs,*** as well as on IT infrastructure for local offices.

Experiences

- Define a realistic ***set of indicators by geographical level*:**
  - Ukraine: establishing a single indicator system and reporting mechanism;
  - Moldova: statistical gap exercise and a list of immediate user needs for the monitoring and evaluation of regional development policy;
  - Lebanon: assessment of the available demographic indicators and breakdowns.

- Bring together the ***demand and the supply for regional and local statistics:***
  - Moldova: enhanced and regular dialogue between users and producers, training of users by NSI staff:
    - Training needs assessment for users (incl. the Ministry for Regional Development and Construction and the Regional Development agencies);
    - Training programmes jointly or separated from the producers;
    - Establishment of a training capacity; i.e. Training of Trainers
  - Ukraine: organisation of working meetings between producers (NSI) and the Ministry for Regional Development, and formalisation of an Inter Institution WG on Monitoring and Indicators for Regional Development

Experiences

- Understand the trade-off between geograhical accuracy and relevance:
  - Moldova: introduction of methods of Small Area Estimation to combine administrative and survey data at lower geographical levels.
- Focus on over-arching operations such as regional accounts and localising the SDGs, as well as on IT infrastructure for local offices:
  - Moldova: improved system and sources for the production of regional accounts according to ESA 95.
  - Ukraine: alignment of regional and local development indicators with national SDG indicators.
  - Tajikistan:
    - Computerisation of 'household books' (population register) at Jamoat (local community level);
    - Calculation of regional accounts for the first time.

Conclusion

A compilation of examples of good practices / a manual on regional and local statistics for developing and transition countries could improve the regionalisation of the technical assistance in statistics with a view to continue the modernisation of statistical processes and to monitor SDGs at sub-national levels.

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Thank you!

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