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## IMPROVING THE PRODUCTION AND DISSEMINATION OF STATISTICS

PROJECT

(IPDS)

EUROPEAID/139628/DH/SER/MK

2019/404709



## PROJECT NEWSLETTER No 5-6

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## INTRODUCTION

This Newsletter, as part of the IPDS Project Communication and Visibility Plan, aims to provide information about the project progress, as well as other relevant information for the Project Stakeholders and the General Public. This is a joint COVID-period issue, covering the period April 2021-April 2022.

## PROJECT SUMMARY

### **Basic Project data:**

<u>Beneficiary institution:</u>	State Statistical Office of Republic of North Macedonia
<u>Contracting Authority:</u>	Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of North Macedonia
<u>Implementing Consortium:</u>	BIM Consulting (BG), National Statistical Institute (BG)
<u>Contract value (€):</u>	1 648 500
<u>Start date:</u>	18.02.2019
<u>End date:</u>	30.09.2022
<u>Overall Duration:</u>	43 months 13 days/ 3,5 years
<u>Project website:</u>	<a href="http://www.stat.gov.mk/ZaNas.aspx?id=15">http://www.stat.gov.mk/ZaNas.aspx?id=15</a>

### **Overall objective of the project**

The overall objective of the project is to improve the quality and availability of statistical data and enhance their use in development and coordination of public policies.

### **Specific objectives of the project**

The specific purpose of this project is to further support the State Statistical Office of Republic of North Macedonia in harmonization with EU acquis and upgrading its statistical and ICT infrastructure for increased efficiency of the statistical production and improved data quality in order to respond better to emerging challenges from the changing EU acquis.

### **Components of the project**

**Component 1: Further alignment with the EU standards in the field of macro-economic statistics** will improve the existing methodology according to the recommendations of ESA 2010 about quality of national accounts data, ESA 2010 methodology and data provided to Eurostat according to the transmission programme that defines the accounts and tables that are to be provided by all EU member states according to specific deadlines



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**Component 2: Further alignment with EU standards in the field of business statistics** will aim to improve quality of the SBR and to introduce the satellite account for tourism. It consists of two subcomponents: 2A (Statistical Business Register) and 2B (Tourism Satellite Accounts)

**Component 3: Further alignment with EU standards in the field of social statistics** will aim provide quality assurance of all phases of the Census in alignment with the CES Recommendations for the 2020 Censuses of Population and Housing and EU Regulations, as well as to increase confidence of the census results

**Component 4: Further improved ICT infrastructure** will aim to reengineer the statistical IT system in line with EU and international standards, increasing the system efficiency and safety, speeding up and lowering the cost of the data production, improving the accuracy and timeliness of data and the processing of surveys. This component is divided into 3 subcomponents (A Revising and drafting functional specification for re-engineered IT system for statistical production, IT system development and evaluation of deliverables; B Developing the IT system for Statistical Business Register; C Preparation of technical specification for supply contract for replacement of the computer network, the data centre and equipment for the Disaster Recovery Centre)

***Expected results (Project Deliverables):***

**Component 1: National Accounts**

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Excessive Deficit Procedure (EDP) tables improved and transmitted to EUROSTAT in accordance to the European System of National and Regional Accounts (ESA 2010) Transmission Programme.

**Component 2A: Statistical Business Register**

New Statistical Business Register designed and later tested after operationalization under component 4B

**Component 2B: Tourism Satellite Accounts**

Tourism Satellite Accounts compilation process established in the State Statistical Office

**Component 3: Social Statistics**

Reports on Preparation, Conducting and Processing of the Population Census in the Republic of North Macedonia

Methodological Assistance for the Population Census in the Republic of North Macedonia

**Component 4A: Re-engineered IT system for statistical production**

Re-engineered IT system for statistical production developed as a software

**Component 4B: IT System for Statistical Business Register**

New Statistical Business Register developed as a software

**Component 4C: Technical Specifications for hardware**

Needs Analysis performed and Technical Specifications prepared for Supply of Hardware under another EU Contract



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## FIFTH AND SIXTH INTERIM PERIOD APRIL 2021 – APRIL 2022

The third year of the project saw major changes and advances in the project implementation. The major public event was the successful Population Census which was held in the period March-September 2021 with the results being publicly announced at the end of March 2022. The project contributed to the Census efforts via its Component 3 Social Statistics, where a Slovenian Senior Non-Key expert Mr. Danilo Dolenc assisted the State Statistical Office of North Macedonia (SSO) in the period February 2021-April 2022 by:

- ✓ Methodological work on strategy of data processing
- ✓ Methodological work on adequacy and harmonization of methods to determine usual resident population with international census standards and recommendations
- ✓ Methodological Assistance on Setting up final census dissemination databases
- ✓ Reporting to EU Delegation in Skopje on the main stages (preparation, conducting and processing) of conducting the Census of Population, Households and Dwellings

The detailed data from the Census 2021 can be found in the Makstat database on the website [www.stat.gov.mk](http://www.stat.gov.mk).

Component 1 National Accounts faced major hurdles as some of the project team experts left the project to start new jobs at EUROSTAT, IMF, etc. They were replaced by a team from the Czech Statistical Office, who started working in the summer of 2021 and helped overcome the delays in the Component by completing in January 2022 the long overdue ESA 2010 Gap Assessments. Also in March 2022 a Study Visit of 7 SSO experts from the National Accounts Unit visited for one week the Czech Statistical Office in Prague, Czech Republic.

Under Component 2B Tourism Satellite Accounts (TSA) the work continued as planned and the first set of pilot tables for TSA have been compiled with data for 2019, which is the first year with available data from all data sources - Border survey, Survey at accommodation establishments for foreign tourist, Household's survey on travelling of the residents and National Accounts. The Demand side of TSA system (Tables T1-T4) has a very good quality of data and generally respects the international standards with data quality. The quality of the supply side TSA tables (T5-T6) could still be improved by SSO in the future regarding consistency of production account data, internal tourism demand side data and tourism ratios. A Study visit of 4 SSO staff to the Bulgarian National Statistical Institute in Sofia was held in December 2021.

Under Component 4 the development of the two softwares, required by SSO – a metadata driven system for statistical surveys and a new Statistical Business Register, continued, albeit with delays.

**Overview table of the Status of the IPDS Project Components**

Component/Sub-Component	Status
Component 1 National Accounts	Ongoing
Component 2A Statistical Business Register	Ongoing
Component 2B Tourism Satellite Accounts	Ongoing
Component 3 Social Statistics	Completed
Component 4A Reengineered IT system	Ongoing
Component 4B IT System for SBR	Ongoing
Component 4C Technical specifications	Completed



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STUDY VISIT TO THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL INSTITUTE IN SOFIA BULGARIA DECEMBER 2021

The main subject of the study visit was to present the Bulgarian experience in the field of Tourism Satellite Account (TSA), the way the TSA was developed and cooperation between Tourism statistics and National accounts (NA). Four participants from the State Statistical Office of North Macedonia were in the National Statistical Institute of Bulgaria for one week in December 2021.

Another subject of the study visit was to discuss some methodological clarifications from national accounts perspective regarding TSA.

The foreseen topics in the Agenda were coordinated with the participants and prepared in the form of presentations and practical examples.

Compilation of TSA Tables 1 - 4 and TSA Table 10 was presented. The sources for information, estimations and adjustments in TSA Tables 1 - 4 for Bulgaria were introduced and discussed.

The template for voluntary data transmission to Eurostat was reviewed. The beneficiaries' experts expressed their willingness to provide voluntarily data for verification to Eurostat for 2019 TSA Tables, developed during the project.

During the last part of the study visit along with the wrap-up of the meeting was discussed some problems linked to the developing of surveys in the field of tourism in North Macedonia.



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## STUDY VISIT TO THE CZECH STATISTICAL OFFICE IN PRAGUE MARCH 2022

The Study Visit aimed for SSO staff to learn more about methodological and practical issues related to compilation of Annual Sector Accounts, Quarterly sector accounts, EDP statistics and Government finance statistics from the point of view of the Czech Statistical Office.

The Study Visit began on 07.03.2022 with presentations on the Annual Sector Accounts by Mr. Vitezslav Ondrus and Mr. Pavel Michl (Head of the Sectoral Accounts Unit in CZSO), supported by Mr. Vladimir Kermiet (Head of the National Accounts Department in CZSO). Among the topics presented and discussed were the Data sources used, the Principles and Methods applied, the Revision Policy, the Cooperation with the other institution, the annual sector accounts of non-financial corporations, the financial institutions, the households and the Non-profit institutions serving households (NPISH).

On 08.03.2022 the Study Visit continued in the morning with presentations by Mr. Karel Safr (National Accounts Department of the CZSO) on the Seasonal and Calendar Adjustment of Quarterly National Accounts in the Czech Republic, Ms. Jana Mazankova (National Accounts Department of the CZSO) on the Data Sources for Quarterly GDP and the Publication Timetable in CZSO. In the afternoon Mr. Jakub Vincenc presented Investment income attributable to collective investment fund shareholders, as well as Capturing margins in the Czech national accounts and Ms. Helena Houzviczkova presented estimates of the Financial Intermediation Services Indirectly Measured (FISIM).

On the next day (09.03.2022) in the morning Mr. Pavel Michl (Head of the Sectoral Accounts Unit in CZSO) presented the GDP by Income approach in the Czech National Accounts as well as the Concept of Employment in the National Accounts. In the afternoon, Mr. Petr Musil and Mr. Jaroslav Kahoun presented the Compilation of Government accounts in CZSO.

Mr. Jaroslav Sixta on Thursday, 10.03.2022 in the morning presented the Volume Measures in the Quarterly National Accounts of the Czech Republic, while in the afternoon Mr. Pavel Michl, Mr. Petr Musil and Mr. Jaroslav Zbranek presented the Small Tools Calculation Scheme and the Sector Accounts of S.11 Non-financial corporations

On the last day, 11.03.2022, Friday, Mr. Vitezslav Ondrus, Mr. Jaroslav Sixta and Mr. Petr Musil led a morning session on the consistent approach to national accounts compilation and the Interlinkages among fields of national accounts. Then a closing session was held with all participants as a summary of the presentations and the discussions.



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#### CENSUS RESULTS ANNOUNCEMENT EVENT MARCH 2022

The IPDS Project Senior Non-Key expert on the Census Mr. Danilo Dolenc took an active part in the event held in Skopje on 30 March 2022 when the results from the Population and Housing Census were announced. He had an overview presentation during the Event and also contributed with a Final report on the Census as well as Detailed report on each stage of the Census in English language.

The main conclusion of the presentation and the reports is that The 2021 Census of Population, Households and Dwellings in the Republic of North Macedonia was as a whole conducted in compliance with international standards. The Census results are reliable, trustable, valid and useful for economic and social policy planning, which is a key objective of censuses around the world.

Two main international methodological documents have been respected and almost fully implemented:

a. Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2017/543 of 22 March 2017 laying down rules for the application of Regulation (EC) No 763/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council on population and housing censuses as regards the technical specifications of the topics and of their breakdowns; and

b. Conference of European Statisticians Recommendations for the 2020 Censuses of Population and Housing, United Nations, New York and Geneva, 2015.

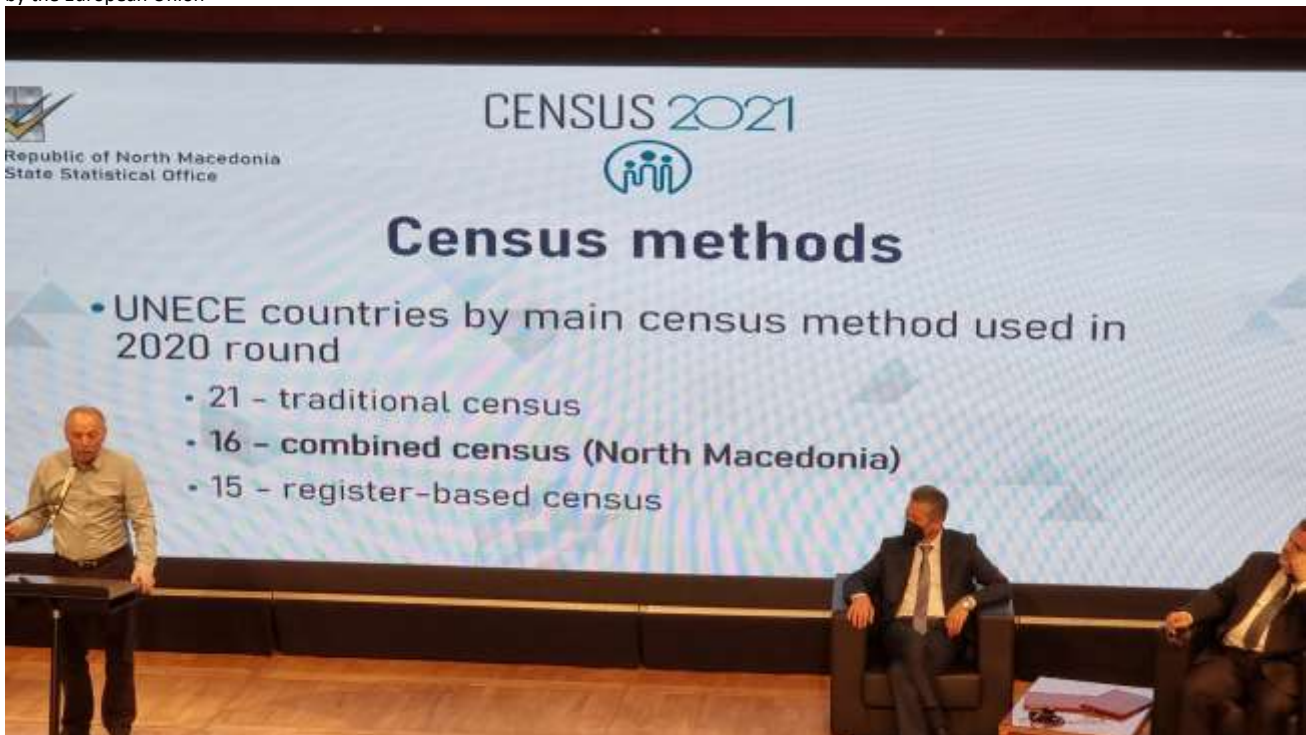
Web-based self-enumeration of North Macedonian citizens residing abroad was a novelty and could be considered as an excellent solution for national circumstances.

The total costs of the Census (EUR 8.5 million of which EUR 3 million for laptops for fieldwork that are now used for educational purposes and by public administration) places North Macedonia among countries with the lowest costs per capita (EUR 4.1).





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#### Project Implementation in COVID times

The Second year of the Covid worldwide epidemic and the third year of the project implementation saw the day-to-day project life gradually adopting a normal rhythm with about 90% of the project working days being implemented in SSO in Skopje and the resumption of the Study Visits abroad. Of course the epidemic continued to impact the project implementation both directly (experts and beneficiary staff being ill and thus unavailable for work) and indirectly (due to the restrictions imposed a number of project events like workshops and seminars were not held, or were held online or in SSO, instead outside of SSO; also the number of people travelling on Study Visits was reduced due to the travel restrictions imposed). No major COVID outbreaks were observed in SSO and in the Project Team, despite the missions and the Census period.

#### PLAN OF OPERATIONS FOR THE FINAL PERIOD

The project will officially end on 30 September 2022, but most of the Project Components will be finalized actually earlier - by the end of June 2022.

Component 1 National Accounts last missions of the Project experts to SSO in Skopje will be in May 2022 and in June 2022 the final deliverable – a Final report on the Component with recommendations for the future will be submitted to the Beneficiary.

Component 2B Tourism Satellite Accounts will also have its final mission in May-June 2022 with discussions on the last deliverables there – the **Final Procedure Manual** of elaboration of Tourism Satellite Accounts in Republic of North Macedonia and the **Road Map** of elaboration of Tourism Satellite Accounts in Republic of North Macedonia for the future.

The new Statistical Business Register is being finalized and is currently undergoing testing both by the project team and the relevant SSO experts. Trainings with the relevant SSO users will be held.



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The work on the modules of the IT system for statistical production will continue.



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