



Statistics Netherlands' internal training programme and Statistics Netherlands' international contribution to training and development

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Summary

Statistics Netherlands aspires to being a high quality knowledge institution. It is doing everything possible to equip itself adequately for the changing needs in society, now and in the future. The increasing complexity of statistical processes and methodologies is increasing the pressure on staff and management. For this reason priority is given to upgrading the knowledge and skills of employees and management through a continuous process of learning, training and development. This paper describes how Statistics Netherlands has put training into practice for two target groups: its own staff and international colleagues. A third target group, users, are beyond the scope of this paper.

1. Introduction

1.1. High quality knowledge institution

Statistics Netherlands wants to present itself as a high quality knowledge institution. The knowledge and employability of the staff are crucial production factors for such an institution. In a professional organisation like Statistics Netherlands human resources are the most important asset.

To realise and maintain this status, Statistics Netherlands is doing its best to be a modern and attractive employer. HRM policy and tools are mainly aimed at realising *life-time employability* rather than *life-time employment*. In practice this means that they must support personal development and mobility or employability of staff members and managers, as well as making the work enjoyable, valued and challenging.

Staff are given increasing independence and asked to take more responsibility for their work. Statistics Netherlands is doing everything possible to equip itself adequately for the changing needs in society, now and in the future. The increasing complexity of statistical processes and methodologies places a lot of pressure on staff and management. For this reason priority will be given to upgrading the knowledge and skills of employees through a continuous process of learning, training and development.

Training and development goals can be divided into four categories:

- *maintenance*, focusing on consolidation of knowledge and skills in order to perform at the required level;
- *improvement*, focusing on improving performance;
- *mobility, flexibility and employability*, encouraging and facilitating staff members to take on new jobs within (or outside) Statistics Netherlands
- *innovation*, focusing on the integration of new statistical or ICT techniques in the everyday practice of the primary processes of SN

1.2. Three main target groups for statistical training

Statistics Netherlands' strategy and policy for training and development focuses not only on educating its own staff members and managers. It also wants to contribute to educating international colleagues and to share its knowledge and experience. To this end Statistics Netherlands participates in the technical assistance programmes of the European Commission and in the European Statistical Training Programme.

Furthermore, to underline the relevance and accessibility of statistical information, efforts are directed to informing and educating the public: statistics are explained with the aid of metadata, background articles are published and from time to time training courses are given on how to use StatLine, our extensive online statistical database. Although it is very important, this latter group is not included in the scope of this paper.

1.3. Integrated management

With the introduction of the principle of integrated management¹ in 2005, Statistics Netherlands abandoned the philosophy of a centralised management system. Nowadays management tasks are at the lowest possible level, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, unless they are related to strategic office-wide subjects.

For training this meant that most of the tasks of the in-house *Training and Development Academy*, such as organizing and facilitating staff education and training have been relocated to the divisions. The Academy was dissolved.

In line with the so-called WFBB-cycles, the operational manager is responsible for the individual needs of his/her staff, and thus for the realisation of his unit's organisational goals. The manager determines where the skills and knowledge of his staff members need to be improved, and translates this into relevant individual training and development activities for each employee.

Central management remains responsible for the organisation's need for training to fulfil its strategic goals and generic training goals, like the management development programme, contracting professional suppliers of training through tender, decision-making and coordination of international cooperation (European Statistical Training programme and technical assistance), and providing expertise in communication with the users.

2. Statistical education programme available to own staff

2.1. Introduction

As stated above, Statistics Netherlands is doing everything possible to equip itself for the changing needs in society now and in the future. Priority is given to upgrading the knowledge and skills of employees through a continuous process of learning, training and development. Therefore the necessary preconditions and tools are created for appropriate and customised activities and deliberate interventions.

The paper describes the following elements:

1. Personal development
2. Statistical Tree for upgrading statistical knowledge
3. EST PMT Course
4. ESTP courses
5. Management Development programme for potential and current managers

Out of a total annual budget of € 179 million, Statistics Netherlands spent € 2 million on training and development in 2008. The bureau employs 2,168 FTE including interviewers (8-2009). Average

¹ Integrated management means that organisation units are completely responsible for and have complete authority in their field of work, goals, processes, employees and resources. In an integrated model, the directors provide the conditions, set the terms and ensure consistency; unit managers manage their own processes. Central management controls the total – integrated – result and sets the terms within which the unit managers may operate.

expenditure per employee is around € 920. The decentralisation principle also applies to the budget for training and development.

Parts of the programme are developed by Statistics Netherlands and other parts are contracted out (if necessary after a European call for tender). At the moment we have framework contracts with eleven contract parties on the following topics: ICT training, general middle and higher professional education (Master's degree), personal effectiveness, management development, management for young potentials and writing skills.

Central management is responsible for the 'make-or-buy' decision and the selection of the contract parties.

The internal need for education is decided after a survey among the divisions which use personal development plans.

2.2. Personal Development

Under an HRM-policy based on the integrated management concept, operational managers at Statistics Netherlands steer on competencies: knowledge, skills and attitude. They stimulate staff members to develop themselves, and encourage them to follow education and training courses. To do this, the managers adhere to the yearly WFBB-cycles. A chronological 4-step system of:

1. drafting a personal workplan;
2. performance interview: monitoring compliance with the workplan and general performance;
3. assessing and evaluating competencies in detail;
4. assigning a score (in a scale from A to D). Staff receiving a better than required score may receive a small financial bonus.

Career counselling, with explicit attention to the personal development of individual staff members is very important. These consultations look at how employees can develop further in their own job, or improve and upgrade themselves through education and experience, to be promoted. In this respect Statistics Netherlands works with Personal Development Plans (in Dutch: POP). Part of the performance interview covers individual education wishes. On the basis of the evaluation of the WFBB-cycles, the manager in charge may decide that intervention is necessary and propose additional education to improve individual aspects of the staff member.

By way of a public tender procedure, Statistics Netherlands contracted several professional education bureaus which offer a broad range of non-statistical courses and training, in order to increase personal effectiveness of staff members. The list is not restrictive; staff themselves may propose other appropriate courses. Application is on personal basis. The division's HR consultant, or the operational manager helps the staff member to select the course which best serves his/her needs.

Further steps taken in this area:

- Improving the internal and external job vacancy database: efforts are being made to make it more user friendly, conveniently arranged, and complete for whole central government;
- Several pilots on competence management (Handbook Competence profiles?);
- Job classifications: on the basis of an inventory of existing job positions at Statistics Netherlands, a matrix has been constructed on the basis of the processes within the organisation, taking into account current and foreseeable developments in these processes and in the job content. The organisation of the matrix is based on job families.
- Interactive e-learning module for field interview staff (interviewers for CAPI surveys). The test must be passed to become an interviewer.
- Encouraging and facilitating new staff to accompany colleagues to conferences and working groups. This is a very effective as learning-on-the-job experience.
- In order to improve communication skills, Statistics Netherlands asked an external training bureau to organise the one-day training course on "Communication is a skill". The course was mandatory for all staff. Around 2,500 staff members attended one of the 100 training sessions, in groups of 25 persons. The first round was conducted by the external bureau, which then trained staff members at Statistics Netherlands to take it over.
- The Division of Business Statistics has developed its own one-week course, which is mandatory for all staff working in this division.

2.3. The statistical tree

2.3.1. Introduction

In the past, Statistics Netherlands has provided several courses on statistical methodology: sampling, editing, statistical disclosure, multivariate analysis, seasonal adjustment and National Accounts. Some short introductory courses about the statistical process have also been organised in recent years. These courses were not systematically integrated, nor were they based on any training policy. This lack of system gave rise to the idea of a “statistical tree”.

2.3.2. The statistical tree

The Division for Methodology and Quality developed the statistical tree. This tree divides the statistical work area into 18 subjects. The subjects are listed in annex 1, with the appropriate key concepts for each subject. In addition to the 18 statistical modules, there is a module on business architecture, a module on the “Centre for policy statistics” and the Division of Macro-economic Statistics contributes with a module on indices. Adding this part to the statistical subjects is a must in a structure like “the statistical tree” because these are the roots of this imaginary tree. Their task is to support the whole structure, both now and in the future.

All new employees with a degree in higher education sign an employment contract, which includes a clause specifying that they have to take the starter course after completing the introduction session. The subsequent learning track that the employee must follow depends on his or her job. This is monitored by the operational manager.

The starter course addresses all 19 + 2 subjects listed in annex 1 in about one hour each. The emphasis is on how the subjects are interrelated. The topics “Introduction to the statistical process”, “Quality” and “Architecture” deal with the entire process. The 18 course hours add up to a three-day programme, roughly divided into input, throughput and output/analysis.

Only people who have completed the starter course can participate in the basic and advanced modules. This allows them to apply for certain statistical functions. Some of the basic and advanced courses conclude with an exam. Participants who pass these exams receive a certificate. In the basic modules participants learn more details about the material discussed in the starter course. These modules are taught in one-day sessions of 6 to 7 hours per module. This limited set-up makes it possible to develop modules that are relevant and interesting for a wide range of employees. As a consequence, goals must be selected strictly and teachers must be able to monitor the abstraction level required. Additionally, Statistics Netherlands offers six advanced modules each year. The material costs are low because Statistics Netherlands use in-house trainers, senior experts and methodologists with longstanding training experience.

2.3.3. Advanced in-house methodology courses

In addition to the starter courses, employees can apply or can be advised to participate in an advanced course of one or more days. A selection of starter course subjects are studied in more detail. In 2009 Statistics Netherlands provides the following advanced methodology courses:

- Sampling
 - Data editing for economic statistics
 - Statistical analysis I
 - Statistical analysis II
 - National Accounts
 - Non-response correction
 - Longitudinal data
- In preparation:
- Seasonal adjustment
 - Statistical confidentiality (statistical disclosure control)

The Annex contains an overview of the courses in the statistical tree.

2.4. PMT Course (Process, Methods and Tools)

The Process, Methods and Tools (PMT) Course was developed by the Division of Methodology and Quality in response to a regular demand by staff and managers (meets a need). The course is divided into modules and deals with standard tools and their use in the primary statistical process. The course is based on the newly implemented processes as currently practised at Statistics Netherlands. It starts out from a provisional set of basic steps which are used as components to construct complete statistical processes. For each basic step, one or more tools are available that can be used to implement the step. If a basic step makes use of statistical methodology, it must be based on the Method series. The course modules are geared to various groups of staff, such as managers, (business and software) architects, R&D staff, and statisticians who specify standard tools to use them for certain statistics.

- Module 1 gives an overview of a statistical process, made up of basic process steps, and is put into practice with statistical methods, procedures and standard tools.
- Module 2 gives a more extensive overview of the statistical process, recognising the basic process steps, and constructing a statistical process in a concrete situation.
- Module 3 gives an overview of methods, procedures and types of rules which can be used to put a process step into practice. It also examines a number of dataset types related to the model for conceptual metadata.
- Module 4 examines - in separate sub-modules - the standard tools (more standard tools are to be added). It also covers the functionality of all these tools from the perspective of the specific process steps for which they can be used. Sub-modules already available are: Blaise, Clementine, Manipula, RuleBurst and SPSS.

2.5. Courses in the European Statistical Training Programme

The 31 ESTP training courses on offer in 2009 are the result of intense and fruitful cooperation between Eurostat and the National Statistical Institutes of the European Statistical System (ESS). Training courses for European statisticians have always been an important element in improving the quality of national and European statistics by transmitting methodological know-how and by fostering the exchange of good practices among countries. The European Statistical Training Programme, in particular, contributes to strengthening the European Statistical Capacity Building and promoting the harmonisation of statistical data and concepts at European level².

Statistics Netherlands is very active in the ESTP programme. On the one hand as a user, by enabling and stimulating its staff to participate in ESTP courses. And on the other hand as a provider, as it is a contract party in the consortium organising many of the courses (see 3.3.).

The national ESTP Contact Point in the Central Policy Staff's international relations unit plays an active role in this respect. Staff are encouraged to apply for courses in their field of expertise, a special page of the intranet is dedicated to ESTP, we promote the courses by placing regular announcements and reminders on the news page of our intranet and we directly notify the international coordinators in the divisions. This active policy works very well, as the number of people interested exceeds the number of places available. The international relations staff select and rank applicants in consultation with the divisions.

Statistics Netherlands is very much in favour of its staff participating in the ESTP courses. The added value besides the learning aspects about European Statistics is that participants have the opportunity to gain international experience, to be introduced in and create international networks, to exchange views and experiences with international colleagues, and to broaden their mainly national scope.

2.6. Management Development

² Core Programme ESTP 2009

Another spearhead in HRM policy is the renewed *management development* (MD) strategy and programme. It is oriented at further development and reinforcement of current management and at selecting and training potential managers. Statistics Netherlands aims to develop a favourable environment for managers, to hold on to them and keep them interested, and to create a positive labour market reputation. This MD policy is giving Statistics Netherlands a strong impulse towards equipping itself for the changing needs in society, now and in the future. Because of the strategic importance of the management development programme, central management is responsible. A special MD unit has been created in the HRM department.

Personal development and personal effectiveness is not only an important and continuous process for staff, but also for managers. In the near future, the focus in management development will be on developing HRM tasks further, including communication skills and coaching. Recruitment processes will also take management skills more into account, alongside substantive knowledge. Just as for staff in general, for managers, too, the aim is to stay in a post for a maximum of 6 years. To gain experience they are encouraged to look both inside and outside Statistics Netherlands for a new position.

2.6.1. Management Potential Programme

Potential managers are nominated by way of a search by current managers. Once spotted, consultations with HR managers and some higher or middle managers then take place. If the internal recommendation is positive, candidates have to take a one-day assessment test at an independent professional institute. The MD programme is contracted out to a professional training institute. The programme takes 6 to 18 months and consists of at least three very intensive training modules, coaching and learning group meetings, intervision meetings, learning and working conferences and on-the-job training in starter positions. In my case the group consisted of 12 participants and in the coaching sessions we worked with a very close group of 6 colleagues.

The meeting locations were chosen outside Statistics Netherlands to allow us to be away from your daily work and to focus completely on the training.

2.6.2. Management Development Programme for current management

For the development and reinforcement of current management, a generic programme has been started up on topics introducing new strategies or philosophies or on further development of skills or knowledge. A further mix of mandatory and optional modules is to be introduced soon.

Overview of the Management Development Programme at Statistics Netherlands

Management continued programme (draft)	Development	Mix of mandatory and optional modules
Generic MD programme		Mandatory for current management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - alternative management techniques - train the coach - operational management 		=> Output steering 2 days => Refresher course 1 day => Financial management at Statistics Netherlands 2 days
Specific MD programme		Management potentials >35 years and new managers. Management- and coaching skills +/- 6 months
Young potentials		Management potentials <35 years. Theoretical training: strategic issues, (financial, operational and quality) management, HR. Innovation projects (link to CBS practice and spearheads). +/- 1.5 years

3. Statistics Netherlands' international contribution to training and development

3.1. Introduction

The work programme of NSIs is increasingly being determined by European Regulations and recognised international standards and guidelines developed within international organisations. As a result there is a growing need for coordination and harmonisation of methodology and output. Nowadays, and even more in future, international comparison of statistics is indispensable for policy decisions in the complex and interdependent international relations.

In this context Statistics Netherlands considers it very important that the overall quality of statistical information in the international arena be raised. Although the Netherlands is a relatively small country, it tries to invest in the global future and to contribute to bilateral learning activities and international programmes for training and building up statistical capacity.

As part of its renewed international strategy, Statistics Netherlands contributes actively to transferring knowledge to international colleagues, focussing on three instruments:

1. Bilateral exchange of experiences, good practices and knowledge
2. Contributing to the European Statistical Training Programme and Task Force
3. Participation in technical assistance programmes

3.2. Bilateral exchange of experiences and knowledge

Statistics Netherlands has a longstanding tradition of sharing good practices with its colleagues NSIs as this is a very efficient and effective way of learning from each other and transferring tailor-made knowledge.

These bilateral activities take place at all levels, from central management (high level visits) to expert level (study visits).

With some NSIs, the director-general of Statistics Netherlands conducts these bilateral visits on a regular basis, hosted alternately. With other DGs he visits (or receives them), on invitation as a result of a special topic. The programme and discussion points during these visits are set by topical and strategic subjects and challenges, e.g. reorganisation because of budget cuts, reorganisation of processes, reduction of response burden and the role of statistics in the international economic crisis. To follow up these visits, it may be decided, for instance, that a subsequent visit at operational level is needed for a further exchange of views, discussion of expert documents, or assistance in implementation.

At the level of directors and middle management, Statistics Netherlands cooperates with several other NSIs who are in the course of a similar reorganisation of statistical processes. It works very well for all NSIs involved to learn from each other by discussing the encountered problems, possible solutions, best practices and benchmarking processes.

At expert level, most bilateral study visits take place in the context of international expert groups. These networks create the conditions for an international exchange of views on problems, enabling the selection of the most appropriate NSI for further assistance with the implementation of a Regulation or with problems in a certain statistical area. A study visit of one or two days to Statistics Netherlands, or a mission to the NSI concerned, with additional e-mail or phone support is the most efficient way to do this.

I would like to mention two interesting aspects in this context:

1. Statistics Netherlands' young statisticians club (*Introstiek*) organises two-yearly study visits for its members. In 2008, 75 young Dutch statisticians from various fields of work visited Statistics Lithuania. Their Lithuanian colleagues prepared an enjoyable and very interactive programme with parallel sessions. The overall conclusion was that it was a very fruitful and motivating brainstorming meeting and exchange of views, that strengthened international colleague relationships; it was certainly worth the investment of time and money on both sides.

2. A few years ago part of the team who have been teaching the 10 and 8-day national accounts courses for many years was invited to a sister NSI to give a one-week training session. Although the costs were high, it turned out to be very efficient to combine traditional training with assistance on the work floor.

3.3. Contribution to European Statistical Training Programme (ESTP)

3.3.1. Introduction

Statistics Netherlands is strong advocate of the aim and the subjects of the European Statistical Training Programme (ESTP) financed by the European Union. The ESTP programme and courses are intended to maintain a high level of competence and to ensure that quality is consistent throughout the European Statistical System (ESS) by providing statistical training services on new methods, techniques and best practices related to the statistical subject fields, and to integrate the application of European concepts and definitions.

Statistics Netherlands expresses its support by actively participating as a contract party in the consortium, organising courses, supplying trainers and giving its own staff the opportunity to participate in these courses (see 2.5.). In our opinion this is an effective combination of international cooperation, aimed at statistical education and quality, encouraging improved coordination and harmonisation at the European level, and serving as a platform for the exchange of views and international networking.

The popularity of the programme is apparent from the fact that the number of course applications is rising and now usually exceeds the number of places available; also the evaluation reports show good assessments.

3.3.2. ESTP Consortium

Statistics Netherlands participates as a sub-contractor in the consortium, alongside project managers ICON and Adetef and 16 other NSIs. As a result of the tender and selection procedure, this group is responsible for 8 of the 11 lots in the programme. Statistics Netherlands contributes to 3 of the 8 lots as leader and organiser of the extended National Accounts course, as co-leader with Sweden in the Survey Non-response course, and as co-leader with Norway in the Statistical Metadata course. Statistics Netherlands also organises the Statistical Disclosure Control courses for Eurostat staff, and participates in the EFTA course on the Use of Administrative Registers

The consortium functions very well, having introduced its own rules of procedure, annual plenary meetings and a small advisory board. Cooperation with Eurostat is also very good, as all partners aim at the same result: delivering high quality courses with a European dimension and for the benefit of all. We should be proud of the results we have achieved in recent years, as reflected in the evaluation reports. However, in our point of view the financial tendering concept and the involvement of commercial institutions are serious problems. The concern of the NSIs is the ratio between management costs and the direct costs for training in this construction. From our experience with the running of the current ESTP programme 2007 – 2011, we feel management costs could be cut considerably by the introduction of National Contact Points and uniform procedures as created by Eurostat. In the future the possibility of a more permanent organisational structure could be considered by the Task Force ESS LDF, taking into account all the lessons learned in recent years. This study could assess the pros and cons of the various concepts, varying from a very flexible organisational structure (changing teams with calls for tender or grants), to the creation of a well-established institute in the shape of an autonomous agency of the European Commission/Eurostat.

3.3.3. Task Force ESS LDF and ambitions for the future

Statistics Netherlands is pleased to be a member of the Task Force ESS Learning and Development Framework (TF ESS-LDF) and to be in a position to develop a vision and proposals for the future framework. This new European learning and development framework will be explained by my colleague from Eurostat. Here I mention only that it not only focuses on traditional training, but also on many other elements of additional value. For instance, proposals will be developed for modern

learning methods, like e-learning, modalities for the exchange of good practices and study visits, the description of competences for a European statistician, the issue of a European pool of trainers, etc. Statistics Netherlands supports the aim of the ESTP programme and its successor of raising the quality of European statistics and European statisticians. It reflects the spirit of partnership and enhanced cooperation and coordination in the ESS. Therefore, we certainly wish to continue investing in the challenging work of the Task Force, looking to extend traditional courses to other learning instruments. Statistics Netherlands certainly intends to continue to contribute actively by transferring knowledge and enabling its staff to take part in ESTP courses.

3.4. Technical assistance projects

3.4.1. Introduction

Statistics Netherlands has successfully provided technical assistance to countries within and outside Europe in the past, and is therefore often approached to do so for other countries. In our view, providing technical assistance is a very practical and useful form of statistical training and development, assisting and advising foreign NSIs on how to achieve a certain level of quality in a number of areas, varying from methodology, statistical processes, statistical output, operational management and HRM.

Partly on the basis of various EU and Dutch government programmes, Statistics Netherlands has contributed substantially to the support of NSIs in other European countries. The main aim of technical assistance to EU candidate countries is support aimed at compliance with the *acquis communautaire* for statistics by the foreseen entry date.

In addition to one-off missions and study visits that Statistics Netherlands carries out at the request of a country, and which are often financed from grants, Statistics Netherlands also provides technical assistance in long-term wider programmes which are contracted out via a call for tender. In these cases, Statistics Netherlands participates in a consortium and does not take responsibility for intensive organisational or administrative tasks. Statistics Netherlands is actively involved in the USST programme (Upgrading the Statistical System of Turkey) and the Multi Beneficiary Programme for Turkey, Croatia, Romania and Bulgaria with the ICON Institute in Cologne as the consortium leader. In these programmes Dutch experts visit the beneficiary countries and delegates from the beneficiary countries come to Statistics Netherlands on study trips.

3.4.2. Mutual advantages

Technical assistance results in benefits for both the donor and the beneficiary institution. For the beneficiary countries it has the advantages that they can adopt the best practices of their foreign colleagues, and that with the aid of EU funding, they can take giant strides. Statistics Netherlands is especially in favour of investment in long-term systematic assistance to help a beneficiary country to comply with the European statistical requirements. It is also very effective to provide on-site assistance alongside the more traditional working visits to the Netherlands.

Staff at Statistics Netherlands who provide the technical assistance perceive it as very motivational and inspiring because they can exchange experiences, gain international experience, and have to view their own work critically as they transfer their knowledge. It is very educational to analyse yourself and your tasks by explaining to others what you do, and why you do it the way you do it.

3.4.3. Procedure

In 2006, Statistics Netherlands' central management adopted a policy document and strategy for technical assistance. The international relations department of the Central Policy Staff is responsible for decision-making, coordination and organisation of technical assistance projects and programmes. All requests for activities in the framework of technical assistance must be passed to this department, which then formulates a positive or negative recommendation to the Executive Board, which takes the final decision.

The recommendation is based on a number of conditions and criteria:

- Statistics Netherlands expertise: Statistics Netherlands is approached explicitly because of certain expertise and is therefore the most obvious choice;
- Terms of reference: each request must be accompanied by the terms of reference (ToR) so that the assistance can be customised and output can be measured.
- Good governance of the requesting country. This is not applicable for EU members and candidate members.
- Sustainability: the technical assistance will contribute substantially to the further improvement of the statistical system of the requesting NSI/country.
- Geographical restriction: the technical assistance policy of Statistics Netherlands is restricted to NSIs from new EU members, candidate EU members, former Dutch overseas territories, or NSIs from other countries who cannot benefit from the expertise of NSIs in their own region.
- Thematic restriction: assistance is only given for subjects in which Statistics Netherlands is seen as leading (according to a recently compiled list).
- Budgetary restriction: technical assistance may account for a maximum 0.5% of the annual formation budget.
- Assistance can in principle be given if:
 - enough capacity is - or can be made - available. Obviously, providing technical assistance may not be at the expense of the regular work programme.
 - external funding is available, primarily from EU funds and programmes.

3.4.4. Upgrading the Statistical System of Turkey (USST)

The European Commission supports potential EU candidate members such as Turkey in their preparations for possible accession to the EU. One important condition is that these countries comply with the *acquis communautaire*³. To adapt and improve the statistical system in Turkey, the USST programme was set up, alongside other EU-funded programmes such as Medstat⁴, MBP Phare⁵ and IPA⁶ which are aimed at several countries, including Turkey.

Improvement of the capacity is one of the key components of the USST Programme. The overall objective of the programme is to assist Turkey in the implementation of its pre-accession strategy in the field of statistics. The programme provides the technical and human resources required to design and implement the necessary transfer of know-how. Many of the statistical areas which have been given highest priority are important for the reliable information required for the management of the pre-accession process and future membership.

Statistics Netherlands had already signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Turkstat in 2005, expressing the intention to provide long-term mutual assistance in certain statistical areas. This declaration of intent also reflects the preference of Statistics Netherlands to provide long-term systematic technical assistance for reasons of effectiveness and continuity.

For each contract period, USST covers a number of statistical areas, such as enterprises, business registers, transport, implementation of NACE, social statistics, vocational training, agriculture, health and national accounts. In addition, it also includes the topic of publications, as an important cross-sectional component. In this context, Statistics Netherlands' experts have established close

³ The *acquis communautaire* is the set of treaties, regulations, directives and jurisprudence of the EU Court of Justice. This contains all the rules with which all EU member states must comply.

⁴ Medstat: regional Programme of Statistics in the Mediterranean Region. Beneficiaries: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey.

⁵ The Multibeneficiary Programme Phare 2006 is aimed at improving four statistical fields in Turkey, Croatia, Bulgaria and Romania. Statistics Netherlands participates in a consortium with ICON Institute for short-term statistics.

⁶ IPA: Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance. Beneficiaries: six Western Balkan states and Turkey. See Council regulation 1085/2006 van 17 July 2006.

partnerships and working relations with TurkStat experts. This fruitful cooperation was realised in the second phase of USST. The success is apparent from the evaluation reports and the rising number of requests for study visits in the last twelve months: Statistics Netherlands organised around twenty 2-3 day study visits, receiving three or more Turkstat colleagues each time. If envisaged in the programme, follow-up missions were planned or further assistance by e-mail took place.

USST funding

The USST programme is funded by means of two instruments: a grant to Turkstat, and a call for tender, on which several consortia have submitted offers.

1. the Training and Travel Facility (TTF) is a grant which Turkstat may spend on study visits to NSIs, training courses, and work placements in NSIs. A maximum amount per activity is set for the assisting NSI, so no calls for tender are necessary. The activities are not pre-specified. Turkstat itself determines which USST areas need extra support, in addition to the expert missions to Turkstat by the consortium winning the tender.

2. Following a call for tender, the long-term USST-2 programme was assigned to a consortium led by the ICON Institute⁷, which alongside Statistics Netherlands, is made up of the NSIs of Germany, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Lithuania, Sweden, and three other commercial institutions. In this stage of the programme expert missions will be undertaken to Turkstat. Statistics Netherlands' participation was endorsed by the Board of Directors. The USST-2 programme was to have taken place in 18 months, but this period had to be extended and it will continue up to the end of 2009. A total amount of € 3.25 million euro is available for the call-for-tender part of the USST-2 programme.

In the context of USST-2, a number of Dutch experts went on missions to Ankara in 2009, and at the request of Turkstat, Statistics Netherlands organised study visits for Turkish statisticians to the Netherlands, financed from the grant, on a more than monthly basis.

3.4.5. Multi-Beneficiary Programme Phare 2006 for Turkey, Croatia, Romania and Bulgaria

In line with the ambition and intention to focus long-term technical assistance on a selection of countries, Statistics Netherlands was interested in assisting Turkey, Croatia, Romania and Bulgaria in the Multi-Beneficiary Programme Phare 2006. Therefore Statistics Netherlands decided to take part in the consortium with project management bureau ICON Institute, and this consortium was successful in the call for tender procedure. The implementation period runs from 1 January 2008 to 31 December 2010. The European Commission has made available a sum of € 630.000 for this programme. The assistance is set out in a concrete and detailed work programme of a few dozen pages. The programme is monitored very closely by the consortium leader, which drafts and disseminates monthly reports and quarterly progress reports.

Six experts from Statistics Netherlands provide technical assistance for the sub-projects economic statistics (HICP and short-term statistics) and transport statistics. They travel to the NSIs in these countries, act as trainers at workshops and give further advice through e-mail or telephone consultations. In this programme, too, Statistics Netherlands experts perceive the technical assistance as mutually beneficial: it is an effective means of transferring knowledge and they gain from the experience as well, as they have to reflect on their own work; they find it challenging and are more motivated to do their work well.

⁷ ICON Institute GmbH in Cologne is a commercial project management bureau specialised in private and public sector technical assistance programmes. See www.icon-institute.de

ANNEX 1

The “statistical tree”, “roots” A and B; courses per module

	Theme	Key concepts	Basic	Advanced
1	Introduction statistical process	Units, input/output variables, measurement levels, subpopulations, classification, aggregation, tables, consistency, StatLine.	X	
2	Business Registers	Business Register, coverage, updating, sources, statistical units, survey sampling.	X	
3	Personal register	Municipal Population Register, coverage, updating, sources, linking telephone numbers, sample surveys, inhabitants of institutes.	X	
4	Questionnaires: designing, testing	Concepts, operationalising variables, questions lab, questionnaire techniques, pitfalls, Blaise, lay-out.	X	
5	Survey methods/ digitalising	Data entry, OCR, XML/XBRL, (automatic) coding, internet, web surveys.	X	
6	(re-)approach strategies for enterprises	Organisation of fieldwork, business administrations, (mixed) mode, reminder strategy, non-response reduction, administration of processing phase.	X	
7	(re-)approach strategies for individuals	Organisation of fieldwork, interviewer administration, lead letters, groups that are difficult to observe, methods of approach, (mixed) mode, axis, reminder strategy, non-response reduction.	X	
8	Sampling theory	Sample designs, regression estimators, weighing, variance, Bascula.	X	X
9	Data editing	Editing methods, imputation methods, editing strategies, Slice, UniEdit.	X	X
10	Non-response correction	Imputation, weighing, non-response models, (logistic) regression, Social Statistics Base.	X	X
11	Representative outliers	Reference population, cut-off point, weighing, robust statistics, mean square errors	X	
12	Combining data files	Use of administrative sources, exact matching, small area estimates, repeated weighing, Social Statistics Base, Business Statistics Base.	X	
13	Statistical integration	Harmonising, completing, fitting, synthetic matching, National Accounts.	X	X
14	Statistical analysis.	Multivariate analysis, analysis of survey data, experiments, SPSS.	X	X
15	Longitudinal data	Panel effects, rotating panels, dynamic population, estimating developments, demography, survival analysis.	X	X
16	Time series	Seasonal correction, economic analysis, trends.	X	
17	Statistical security	File protection, table protection (global recoding and local suppression), Argus, active confidentiality.	X	EU
18	Quality	Quality criteria, quality indicators, costs including administrative burden, Total Survey Design	X	
19	Architecture	Generic processes	X	
	Centre for Policy related Statistics	Analysis projects		
	Indices	Price indices		not in 'Tree'
	Total number of hours	Course duration for all modules together (approximately)	18	180

