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Sida Decentralised Evaluation

NCG Consulting Group

# Mid term review of the Project 'Strengthening Statistical System in Kosovo 2019–2023'

Final Report

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**Final Report  
March 2022**

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SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY

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# Abbreviations and Acronyms

AGE	Agency for Gender Equality
CBK	Central Bank of Kosovo
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CRA	Agency of Civil Registration
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DoA	Document of Action
EUOK	European Union Office to Kosovo
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
EQ	Evaluation Question
ET	Evaluation Team
ESA	European System of Accounts
ESS	European Statistical System
EUROSTAT	European Union Statistics
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
GNI	Gross National Income
IPA MB	IPA Multi-Beneficiary
KWN	Kosovo Women's Network
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
ONA	Other National Authorities
PRODCOM	Community Production Survey
MoF	Ministry of Finance
NA	National Accounts
NOE	Non-Observed Economy
NSS	National Statistical System
KAS	Kosovo Agency for Statistics
KII	Key Informant Interview
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SILC	Social Income and Living Condition
STS	Short-term (business) statistics
SUT	Supply and use tables
QA	Quality Assurance
TOR	Terms of Reference
TL	Team Leader
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group

# Executive Summary

The subject of the evaluation is the **Project ‘Strengthening Statistical System in Kosovo 2019-2023’**, which aims to increase the capacities of KAS to carry out its core activities in a standardized and independent manner; including gender equality (in line with EU standards) as well as strengthen KAS’s management and coordination capacities. The evaluation encompassed the project implementation from its beginning in 2019 until December 2021.

The project **‘Strengthening Statistical System in Kosovo 2019-2023’** is financed by the EU and Sweden for a total of € 3,530,000 and is implemented by Statistics Sweden and a consulting company called FCG Swedish Development AB. Statistics Sweden leads peer-to-peer exchange and support between two statistical agencies, while FCG oversees the delivery of results within IT, further capacity development, and overall steering of the project.

**Approach / Methodology:** This evaluation employed a theory-based mixed methods approach for data collection and analysis, i.e. combining the use of qualitative and quantitative data from primary and secondary data sources. The evaluation process included the collection and analysis of documentary and primary data. All data collected from various sources were triangulated both internally and across methods as feasible to ensure a set of evidence-based and credible findings, conclusions and recommendations during the analysis and synthesis phase.

## KEY FINDINGS

### *Relevance*

The evaluation found that the Project design is directly aligned with Kosovo’s national development, EU and sector priorities relating to statistics and its interconnectedness with wider policy-making processes that use statistics as evidence base. There is evidence of the project’s appropriate efforts to address the needs of KAS through targeting institutional capacity needs across specific sectors of importance for KAS and the Kosovo government. The project provides relevant assistance to structural and short-term business statistics and population register and preparation for the census. The evaluation found that the COVID-19 pandemic affected the extent to which the project was able to maintain a strong and consistent focus on addressing gaps in services and institutional capacity strengthening for KAS.

*Effectiveness*

The project's support has been relatively effective, depending on the project's focus area. The evaluation found that the project's contributions to the establishment of social statistics indicators and the development of gender indicators have been effective, resulting in a set of social indicators, the SILC and a set of gender indicators. This support resulted in the publications of the Gender Equality Index and SILC data for the first time in Kosovo.

The project's support of statistics relating to non-observed economy and STS resulted in increased capacity of KAS to conduct these types of surveys and related analytical work. However, project produced limited results thus far when it comes to National Accounts and Community Production Survey has not progressed as planned yet. Besides, the support for preparation for a population register was affected by challenges in terms of cooperation with other Kosovo agencies (e.g., Agency of Civil Registration), which hindered the full potential of the population register at this stage. The KAS is preparing for the 2021 population census, and the plan is to implement it during 2022.

The evaluation found that the project's support for the improvement and presentation of metadata has brought some improvements in IT structures and capacities for the management and presentation of datasets and manuals. However, the metadata is still not functional, and the Ministries and authorities are not reporting as per the required routine, which presents a challenge for KAS going ahead.

Evaluation found that project's support to strengthening of institutional mechanisms for planning and coordination of the national statistical system was relatively effective, leading to some improvements, however, many support areas demand further attention. Hindrances to these components included the staff turnover in KAS and changes in the project framework per KAS's request. Due to these challenges, the project to some extent strengthened the overall capacity and resilience of KAS to some extent. The Training plan, which was envisaged as a building block of the support to strengthen the capacity and resilience of KAS has also not been fully operationalized.

*Effectiveness and sustainability*

The Project was mostly effective in assisting KAS to increase skills to design, implement and disseminate statistical data in line with international standards (Immediate outcome 1). However, the evaluation could not find consistent evidence of the Project's contributions to sustainable improvements of coordination and information sharing among stakeholders in the statistical sector (Immediate outcome 2).

***Efficiency and coherence***

Evaluation data shows that the project's costs are not fully justified by its results, as some challenges remain with strategic allocations of project resources (mainly human resources) to achieve results. The evaluation found that Internal coherence between the two implementing partners has been constrained. Coherence with external partners has been optimal and contributed to important synergies and efficiencies for the project.

***Impact and sustainability***

This evaluation did not find concrete evidence of the impact of the project thus far. Evaluation evidence shows that the potential of the KAS and Statistics Sweden Peer-to-Peer Agency cooperation remains untapped in this project due to challenges brought by COVID-19 restrictions, which negatively affect project implementation.

***Cross-cutting issues***

The evaluation did not find evidence of the project's direct contribution to poverty reduction. The project contributed to gender equality by supporting the development of indicators for the Gender Equity Index and mainstreaming some gender-disaggregated statistics into wider statistics collection tools and dataset requirements. However, the evaluation found that the project could have done more to sufficiently include target groups (KAS team) in project planning, implementation, and follow-up. The project was generally implemented in a conflict-sensitive manner.

**CONCLUSIONS*****Relevance***

The project's strategic directions of investing in direct support to capacity strengthening of KAS are highly appropriate and remain so in light of Kosovo's developmental and EU integration status.

***Effectiveness, impact, and sustainability***

The project delivered its outputs relative to the support of statistics (SILC and gender index data, sectoral business statistics, national accounts, and non-observed economy) and the upgrade of IT systems has been positive. The challenge is to ensure that output-level results transform into more sustainable outcome-level results towards increased institutional capacity at KAS to collect and analyze the data without external support. Other project intervention areas brought partial results.

*Efficiency*

Project efficiency was affected by staff turnover, COVID-19 restrictions, and internal incompatibilities between the two implementing partners. As regards the project implementation, numerous challenges emerged in terms of project operationalization through combining agency-to-agency (Statistics Sweden-KAS) and technical service delivery (by FCG), i.e., two contrasting approaches under one project umbrella.

*Cross-cutting issues*

Cross-cutting issues (poverty, rights approach, gender quality) have not been sufficiently considered in the design and implementation of the project. The project did work with KAS to develop gender equality indicators for the GEI, which has contributed to better understanding of the gender dimension in the development of Kosovo.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Revise and update the project's results framework to reflect the needs of the KAS and realistic possibilities of project partners in light of continued COVID-19 restrictions and other contextual **issues, with consideration of the need for Non-Cost Extension.**
2. Ensure that Statistics Sweden's capacity strengthening and advisory efforts are tailor-made to allow for full coverage of themes in remote format.
3. Project implementing partners should cooperate and share their training and advisory reports with all project partners in line with transparency and accountability principles.
4. Continue empowering KAS to take a greater leadership role in the project planning, implementation, and monitoring.
5. Further elaborate and communicate the SOP and project implementation approaches stipulated in the DoA.
6. Develop an institutional gender development plan.
7. Translate project (and KAS) products into Kosovo's official languages.
8. Actively integrate relevant best practices in employee retention. Understand and implement the learning and developmental needs of staff.

# 1 Introduction

Sida commissioned the mid-term evaluation of the ‘Strengthening Statistical System in Kosovo 2019-2023’ project as an opportunity to benefit from an independent assessment of activities implemented within the project and its performance. The evaluation will assist Sida, the European Union Office in Kosovo (EUOK) and implementing partners to inform adjustments and improvement of the current project and the next phase, and in particular the improvement of the Document of Action (DoA). The evaluation was designed following Sida’s as well as internationally accepted evaluation guidance and standards, i.e., the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability, and coherence of the project. The evaluation team also integrated aspects of assessment of crosscutting dimensions and perspectives such as poverty reduction, gender equality and rights, and conflict sensitivity.

The immediate users of the evaluation findings and recommendations include Sida, EUOK and Kosovo’s Agency of Statistics (KAS). Other intended users are other relevant staff at Headquarters (HQ) within Sida and EU who may benefit from the evaluation findings.

## 1.1 CONTEXT ANALYSIS

A review of KAS documents highlights that, with its vision of the statistical system of Kosovo, it is recognized as a trusted, unfailing provider of statistics. For this reason, KAS is considered to be the leading standard-setting statistical institution in Kosovo. It is envisaged to achieve this vision through a permanent dedication to the improvement of methodology, standards, and statistical presentation in line with the needs of key national and international users of Kosovo statistics.

The Law on Official Statistics (No. 04/L-036) regulates the official statistics of Kosovo, the National Statistical System and the role of the Kosovo Agency for Statistics (KAS). The Law on Official Statistics was ratified by the Kosovo Parliament in 2019. It describes the role of KAS as an independent professional institution and the carrier, disseminator, and coordinator of the statistical system of Kosovo. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of KAS is appointed according to the

legislation in force for appointment of high civil employees<sup>1</sup>. KAS is organized in eight departments; four of these are horizontal departments whereas four are statistical production departments. Each department consists of one to three divisions. A network of seven regional offices is also in place across Kosovo (See Organogram in Annex 5).

**KAS regards the following as its main tasks:**

Prepare the statistical work programs; coordinate activities within the statistical system; prepare and prescribe instruments for statistical surveys; provide methodological advice; advise on new and supplementing existing data sets and on improving content of existing and new data sets in accordance with the Law on Official Statistics and the Program of Statistical Surveys; cooperate with ONA; prepare statistical standards; determine needs for statistical data; prescribe organizational and technical measures for protection of confidential data; collect and process statistical data; analyze statistical data; store and disseminate statistical data; meet international obligations in the area of statistics; and coordinate the transmission of statistical data to Eurostat and other international organizations.

In addition to coordination of the statistical work programs, the Law on Official Statistics defines KAS as the coordinating institution of the statistical system in Kosovo and responsible for harmonization of official statistics. The Central Bank of Kosovo (CBK), Ministry of Finance (MoF) and "other authorized bodies of the Kosovo Agency for Statistics determined by the program" are defined as ONA according to the Law on Official Statistics. KAS is responsible for determining and developing statistical methodology, classifications, and standards for producing Official Statistics. Worth mentioning is the fact that KAS has prepared the five-year statistical work program for the period 2018-2022 and is leading the work for the preparation of the next five-year statistical program for 2023-2027. The priority of KAS mandate is to provide statistical data to support policies of Kosovo institutions, EU policies, decision-making and measurement of economic, social and environmental phenomena and maintain close contact and collaboration with relevant

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<sup>1</sup> Eurostat Kosovo Peer Review  
[https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/45004/9826397/Peer\\_review\\_report\\_KAS\\_Kosovo\\_final.pdf/ea9f77cd-30b0-4c38-9e66-09b7a90fc968](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/45004/9826397/Peer_review_report_KAS_Kosovo_final.pdf/ea9f77cd-30b0-4c38-9e66-09b7a90fc968)

stakeholders to improve the quality, comparability and consistency of official statistics.

The Statistical Council consists of 13 members including the CEO of KAS, various public institutions representing users and data providers, Other National Authorities (ONA), academia, civil society and the business community. The main responsibility of the Statistical Council is to advise on the preparation of the statistical work programs, annual plans and on the overall development and functioning of KAS, and to advise on the harmonization and coordination of statistical products within the Kosovo Statistical System. Monitoring and evaluation of the annual plans are also performed by the Statistical Council.

The latest EU Progress Report for Kosovo<sup>2</sup> states that Kosovo has made some level of preparation in the area of statistics. Some progress was made, notably in improving data collection methodology and data transmission to Eurostat. The Kosovo Agency for Statistics needs to intensify its efforts to implement the recommendations of the Eurostat peer review. Communication between the statistical providers has somewhat improved but the coordination at the technical level and the use of available administrative data sources has not improved significantly enough since last year. Kosovo should, in particular:

- i) increase the number of statistical products and their transmission to Eurostat;
- ii) improve statistical governance and coordination between the main statistical institutions and ensure better access to and use of available administrative data sources;
- iii) improve liaisons and build relations with external data users;
- iv) intensify preparations for the next population census in 2022 by ensuring adequate resources and full coverage of the territory.

## 1.2 SUBJECT OF THE EVALUATION

The mid-term evaluation was focused on the support provided by Sweden to the Kosovo Agency of Statistics through the project ‘Strengthening Statistical System in Kosovo 2019 – 2023’. There are two main actors involved: Statistics of Sweden

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<sup>2</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/kosovo-report-2021\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/kosovo-report-2021_en)

(Statistics Sweden) leads the transfer of information between two statistical agencies and oversees two components of the project (See Table 1 below). Consulting company FCG Swedish Development AB, Sweden, manages the other three areas of the project. The project aims to increase the capacities of KAS to carry out its core activities in a standardized and independent manner; including cross cutting issues (including gender equality) – in line with EU standards – as well as strengthen KAS's management and coordination capacities. The team is looking at the project support with a gender sensitive and gender transformative perspective.

The project is financed by the EU and Sweden for a total of € 3,530,000 and is implemented, through indirect management, with the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) (44%). The project is co-financed by the European Union Office in Kosovo (EUOK) (56%) Sida is a long-standing partner of KAS and has provided funding to Kosovo statistical sector since 2001.

The project 'Strengthening Statistical System in Kosovo 2019 – 2023' consists of five key results and respective components with respect to partners involved, as shown in Table 1 below.

**TABLE 1. OVERVIEW OF RESULTS AND PARTNER RESPONSIBILITIES**

Result 1 – implemented by SCB	Further improvement of sector statistics and National Accounts statistics
Result 2 – implemented by SCB	Further development of social statistics indicators and preparation for a population register and implementation of the 2021 population census
Result 3 – implemented by FCG	Further improvement of metadata systems, documentation and dissemination practices and modernization of data collection methods
Result 4 – implemented by SCB	Planning and coordination of the statistical system are strengthened to improve the delivery of objectives and outputs in line with the five-year program for official statistics, and the communication and collaboration with key stakeholders.
implemented by SCB	Activity 4.1 - Improving methodological capacity.
Result 5 – implemented by FCG	Building the overall capacity and resilience of KAS to maximize results and achieve sustainability by strengthening management and organizational development

Most activities are implemented with various KAS departments and in parallel, requiring various forms of technical assistance, including training, mentoring, and coaching, installation and implementation of software and IT hardware. The reconstructed intervention logic of the project is presented in Annex 6.

**Ultimate Outcome: Sound evidence informs government and other actors' decision-making processes.** To reach the outcome of reliable statistical information and improved decision-making, the project should contribute to building and strengthening an independent and more efficient public administration.

**The immediate outcome systematic administration of statistical data collection and analysis processes in line with international standards.** Contribution to improved and systematic administration of statistical data collection and analysis, including EIGE gender equality index indicators introduced to Kosovo will make the pathway and entrance to EU easier, and improve sector statistics both in national accounts and following Eurostat standards, social statistics implemented in population registers, sex-disaggregated and in the population census. Improved metadata systems and dissemination and modernization of collection methods. The improved planning and strengthening of the statistical system and its delivery to stakeholders both internally and externally. The institutional development of KAS, building the overall capacity and resilience of KAS, to maximize results and achieve sustainability by capacity building and institutional development.

### 1.3 EVALUATION PURPOSE AND SCOPE

As mentioned above, the evaluation aims to provide Sida with an understanding of project performance towards its contribution to the strengthening of the statistical system of Kosovo by enabling the development of reliable statistical information and facilitating improved decision-making. Specifically, the TOR stipulated that the midterm evaluation would provide the following input:

- a) The extent to which the project was relevant at the time of conceptualization and remains relevant and suited to the country. The evaluation should evaluate the quality of the project design, including its objectives, results and lessons learned to date.
- b) A description and an assessment of the results achieved, compared to the expected results stated in the project document. This should include also indication of any alternative approach(es) that could have been adopted, if any.
- c) The extent to which the Program is making effective progress in attaining its specific objectives for all five components.

- d) Lessons learned to date and guidance on how to integrate such lessons into project implementation going forward.
- e) Assessment of risks and mitigation measures under the project.
- f) Recommendations for the ongoing implementation of the project and its potential expansion.

The evaluation encompassed the project implementation from its beginning in 2019 until December 2021. Per evaluation ToR, the evaluation was guided by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Development Assistance Committee (DAC) evaluation criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability, and coherence. Gender equality and women empowerment (GEWE) and other cross-cutting aspects of the implementation were also integrated through specific indicators in the evaluation matrix.

## 2 Evaluation approach and methods of work

### 2.1 EVALUATION DESIGN

This evaluation was designed as utilization-focused and consultative, maximizing the value of the evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations for the intended users and supporting learning for current and future interventions.

This evaluation employed a theory-based approach, whereby the primary focus of the assessment was on understanding cause-effect interactions between the project support and the desired outcomes. The theory-based approach aimed to generate both an understanding of what has worked, but also an understanding of why it has worked (or not). The evaluation applied a mixed methods approach for data collection and analysis. The Evaluation Team (ET) combined the use of qualitative and quantitative data from primary and secondary data sources.

### 2.2 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The evaluation process included **three main phases**: inception and desk phase, primary data collection phase and analysis and synthesis phase. The evaluation findings were disseminated to support learning and the buy-in for the evaluation findings.

#### 2.2.1 Data collection tools

##### *Document review*

The evaluation team carried out a comprehensive documentation review covering a range of documents shared by Sida, including EUOK's and Sida's policy documents, project's DoA, monitoring reports and other documentation that describes project intervention and delivery, as well as other project-led or external analytical reports on the reforms of the statistics system in Kosovo or wider reforms that are available. The full list of reviewed documents is found in Annex 3.

##### *Interviews*

The evaluation team conducted a total of 30 semi-structured individual and group interviews in person and/or via Zoom/videoconferences with a priority stakeholder from i) Sida and Embassy stakeholders and EUOK-3, ii) Other project partners-3; iii) project implementation team; iv) KAS management and its departments-10; as well as v) other National Authorities-4. vi) other users of statistics. The majority of the

semi-structured interviews (18) were held in person while the remaining were held via zoom/videoconferencing. A total of 12 (40%) interviews out of 30, were with women.

### *Analysis and Synthesis phase*

Once the primary data collection was finalized, the evaluation team embarked on a fully-fledged analysis and synthesis of evidence and findings. The ET internally shared and reviewed interview notes together as a basis for reflection on main assessment areas through descriptive and comparative quantitative analysis, thematic narrative analysis, qualitative iterative data analysis and contribution analysis. All data collected from various sources were triangulated both internally and across methods as feasible to ensure a set of evidence-based and triangulated findings, conclusions and recommendations. This process resulted in this evaluation report which includes the assessment of the project per each evaluation question and related analytical segments as required by the TOR.

## 2.3 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Evaluation team adhered to the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards<sup>3</sup> and Sida and other internationally accepted standards and guidelines in particular with respect to independence of judgement, impartiality, honesty and integrity, accountability, respect, the protection of the rights and welfare of human subjects. Further, the Evaluation team has ensured sensitivity to gender roles, disability, ethnicity, manners, and culture, as well as ensuring that the evaluation results do no harm to participants.

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<sup>3</sup> UNEG. 2020. Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation. Available at <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/2866>.

## 3 Key evaluation findings

### 3.1 RELEVANCE (EQ 1)

**Finding 1:** The Project design has been directly aligned with Kosovo's national development, EU and sector priorities relating to statistics and its interconnectedness with wider policy-making processes that use statistics as evidence base.

A comparative review of the national strategic framework of statistics and the project's theory of change and implementation strategies points to a strong alignment of Project intervention with national priorities. The findings of the evaluation are corroborated by stakeholder interviews which confirm that the project design took into account and considered government priorities when it comes to ensuring that the statistics methodologies, approaches and systems of data collection are sound. The relevance of the project was visible from the point of its contribution to government priorities through 1) direct support to the implementation of some important priorities (e.g. strengthening the KAS capacity to carry out its core activities in a standardized manner in line with EU standards; preparation and implementation of sectorial and social statistics; 2) advisory and technical assistance contributing to the design of relevant statistics processes and projects; 3) advisory and technical assistance contributing to strengthening KAS staff and IT capacity.

The overarching EU accession including the statistics strengthening priorities have been outlined in the EU-Kosovo Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) and the European Reform Agenda (ERA) but also the Law on Official Statistics (no. 04/L-036), which regulates official statistics of Kosovo, the National Statistical System and the role and responsibilities of KAS. The Project interventions are aligned with and contribute to government priorities as envisaged in these strategies and the law, and in particular the focus on addressing KAS's capacity-strengthening needs and its institutional development to contribute to the strengthening of the statistical system of Kosovo by assisting in the development of reliable statistics in line with the European Statistical System (ESS), European statistical legislation and the *Quality Assurance* Framework of the ESS.

The project has focused on KAS as the sole recipient of the assistance, following the long-term support by Statistics Sweden since the KAS establishment in 1999, with

expansion of support interventions to span different areas of focus including the first national publication of SILC and the first statistical book on women and men in Kosovo since the beginning of the 2000s. The project's DoA was based on the findings of the KAS Needs Assessment Report which placed a strong focus on system, organizational, methodological and development needs. The ET was informed by interviewees that the project aimed at building KAS's capacity to conduct comprehensive statistical projects, some of which have been implemented for the first time by the institution since its establishment (e.g., non-observed economy (NOE) calculations, SILC, Gender equality index (EIGE) and transmitting of the National Account Statistics to Eurostat).

***Finding 2:*** *The project addressed the needs of KAS through targeting institutional capacity needs across specific sectors of importance for KAS and the Kosovo government, and specifically structural and short-term business statistics and population register and preparation for census. However, the COVID-19 pandemic affected the extent to which the project was able to maintain a strong and consistent focus on addressing gaps in services and institutional capacity strengthening for KAS.*

Sida informed its respective focus interventions through extensive evidence and lessons learned from previous support interventions to the KAS and needs assessments conducted by the project partners, as well as KAS'S requests. A wealth of knowledge that Statistics Sweden already had from implementing previous support interventions and ongoing discussions and exchanges between KAS and the project implementers (both Statistics Sweden and FCG) have been useful in identifying the main bottlenecks in the design and implementation of research and statistical data collection processes. Positive examples were found across the project support e.g., Business Statistics SILC, Population register, Non-Observed Economy, where selection of target areas for support was informed by needs assessments and previous support interventions. However, as emphasized by Statistics Sweden, the work on the project design was outsourced to a third party, which prevented optimal integration of Statistics Sweden's inputs regarding the design and set-up as well as its viewpoints on the intervention design. This situation affected the extent to which prerequisites for optimal implementation showed weaknesses.

However, the project has been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The travel restrictions largely affected the relevance of the project as the delivery of hands-on support to the KAS team was not possible in an optimal manner. However, The FCG former TL and K3 expert (who was local) remained in the office for the entire period. The project originally envisioned close physical cooperation between

the respective teams of KAS, Statistics Sweden and FCG across the implementation period. The project did apply adaptive and flexible strategies and activities aimed at continuing the project activities despite the restrictions, however, several activities have been significantly delayed or have been implemented with difficulties, not fulfilling their desired potential.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Statistics Sweden interventions moved online due to travel restrictions demanding KAS and Statistics Sweden teams to interact online on several thematic issues. In principle, such online interactions were deemed as important to maintain the exchange and TA between the partners. However, despite the efforts of both parties, the remote support provided has not been as effective as support on location would ideally have been. One of the factors that have been decisive in this regard has been the capacity of many KAS staff members to navigate online communication tools and the lack of computer equipment while working remotely as noted by some stakeholders interviewed by the ET. Besides, as noted by interlocutors from KAS, the online exchanges lasted less time in average than the face-to-face encounters and were found to be less nuanced and less supportive than in-person work. These challenges affected the quality of interactions and hence, the relevance of this sort of support given the circumstances. To mitigate some of these challenges, the project purchased six laptops to assist the shift to remote work, and KAS bought in addition 100 notebooks from their budget. Besides, the Project team leader (TL/KE3) remained in office to ensure the project presence and that the link with KAS management was maintained at all times, which helped showcase that the project support was still there, despite COVID-19 restrictions. The project stepped in to mitigate the negative side effects of remote working by 80% of KAS staff and assessed the necessary IT equipment for KAS to secure its communications and data. The PIU has organized a series of online meetings to make sure the six interns did not suffer too much from the situation and that the link with their respective supervisors and team members was not severed.

## 3.2 EFFECTIVENESS (EQ 2)

The assessment of the project's performance is organized around the five support intervention areas presented in Table 1 above and related outputs as presented in the reconstructed intervention logic (Annex 6). Assessment per each output and outcome area is elaborated below.

### 3.2.1 Assessment of effectiveness of investments in KAS's capacity to prepare sector and National accounts statistics (Result 1)

***Finding 3.** The Project's support has been relatively effective. Statistics Sweden' and KAS'S cooperation on statistics relating to non-observed economy and STS resulted in increased capacity of KAS to conduct these types of surveys, questionnaires and relating analytical work. However, cooperation when it comes to National accounts and Community Production Survey has not thus progressed as planned yet, and next step will be to support KAS delivery to Eurostat.*

This project component was a follow-up on previous support efforts of Statistics Sweden, envisaged as technical assistance support through ongoing advisory and capacity strengthening through peer exchange and joint work on various areas relevant for National Accounts<sup>4</sup> (NA) system. Some of the areas of intervention planned under this component coincided with wider support interventions of the two consecutive IPA multi-beneficiary projects funded through IPA 2015 and IPA 2017 (hereinafter: IPA MB 2015 and IPA MB 2017).

The cooperation between Statistics Sweden and KAS within this component focused on a number of areas relating to sectoral statistics and NA (including the calculations of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), real sector accounts and financial accounts); the non-observed economy (NOE); business statistics and the *Community Production Survey (PRODCOM)*. Assessment of these individual areas of support shows the varying success of Statistics Sweden in offering timely support, mainly due to the COVID-19 related restrictions to travel. For instance, some areas, such as NA, NOE were not so affected as the work on these started before the COVID-19 restrictions.

The effectiveness of support to NOE was linked by interviewed stakeholders to the fact that most of the work was done in the pre-pandemic period, which was more conducive for hands-on face-to-face exchange and coordinated teamwork, leading to quality design. During the pandemic, the KAS continued finalizing the data collection and calculations for restaurants, with remote support by SCB. As emphasized by stakeholders, the in-person exchanges between KAS and Statistics Sweden helped increase the KAS ability to conduct most of the calculations themselves with only

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<sup>4</sup> The National Accounts system summarises and describes the country's economic activities and development through calculations of GDP, real sector accounts and financial accounts.

minor support by the project. The NOE was also supported by the World Bank in 2018. On the other side, COVID-19 restrictions affected the work on business statistics and PRODCOM, not only due to the need to engage remotely but also due to general restrictions in Kosovo, which affected the approaches to the design and collection of relevant data.

The project also supported KAS in conducting STS surveys, by assisting KAS in improving questionnaires for STS (for the areas of Manufacturing, Transport and Retail/Wholesale trade) as well as developing new questionnaires for STS (for areas of Construction, Services and Building permits). The project also supported KAS on what logical controls/data checks and navigation should be programmed into the web questionnaires to get consistent data. Feedback received from key informants shows that the project contributed to enhancing KAS's capacity to implement these questionnaires (at the time of the evaluation they are implemented every quarter using the software Survey Solution), though there are still outstanding needs and gaps in this area. During the reporting period, in March 2021, KAS published STS services based only on administrative data according to KAS publishing calendar and on their own, without support from the project. Interviewed stakeholders noted that this was a good sign of KAS's increased capacity to conduct such surveys independently. This is also viewed as an important element of sustainability. One of the areas where KAS highlighted limitations was the need to be able to exchange data with the tax authority to have more comprehensive datasets. The surveys are complex and need a wealth of information from authorities and companies, which should then be consolidated information with labor cost data. Interviews with the stakeholders highlight that there are difficulties in ensuring such data exchange between the tax authority and KAS, which limits the extent to which KAS can collect and analyze a wider scope of data to prepare more comprehensive datasets when it comes to economic activity in Kosovo.

The project also engaged in supporting KAS to enhance structural and short-term business statistics, by investing in improving the statistical business register, consolidating new electronic data collection systems for SBS and STS, and updating business survey questionnaires. However, progress across all these activities has been slow, mainly because the KAS IT system for SBR was still underdeveloped, while there was also a turnover of IT staff in KAS, which affected the loss of institutional memory. Besides, stakeholders noted that the fact that the peer exchange and hands-on work was mainly organized online or was halted during some periods due to COVID-19 negatively affected the support in this area.

The work on National Accounts was organized in line with the requests for Kosovo to contribute to the European System of Accounts (ESA 2010) within the framework of

ESA 2010<sup>5</sup>. The project focused on supporting KAS to develop tables for output and income, capital formation, employment supply use and input-output tables. This intervention area has been rather large and comprehensive, and the support was envisaged to increase KAS's capacity to prepare and analyze these tables and produce the data in line with the ESA requirements. Statistics Sweden's support was planned to be rather hands-on and comprehensive, including peer-capacity strengthening and coordinated teamwork on the preparation process, to ensure that the data is prepared in timely manner while also contributing to increasing KAS's capacity through the preparation process.

The project also supported the **supply and use tables (SUT) by supporting KAS to analyze and create a proposal for a product grouping, which resulted in a list consisting of 150 product groups. The evaluation found that the list included sufficient level of detail to meet Eurostat's requirements, at the same time providing KAS with a relevant breakdown of the economy. Considering the fact that two EU funded multi-beneficiary (MB) projects (IPA MB 2015 and IPA MB 2017) were also assisting KAS in these areas, the project made efforts to coordinate with them. As part of such coordination efforts, it was agreed that the two MB projects would assist in the compilation of sector accounts.** The project supported KAS in entering the data for SUT, and at the time of the evaluation, progress was made regarding data entry of agricultural data, but significant work remains to be done due to the fact that such tables are complex and require detailed work.

The task of completing the data entry requires a lot of effort from KAS staff. There is an outstanding need for capacity development for KAS to increase skills in this regard. KAS staff signaled that it was hard to receive remote support for this extensive and complex task. In December 2020, the project and KAS discussed the slow progress in this regard and plausible ways to proceed. The project and KAS decided to pause the remote support and restart the same at a time when there is a possibility for physical missions.

The evaluation team and KAS were informed during the evaluation field mission that the physical missions that were initially planned for December 2021 were cancelled, due to extended Covid-19 restrictions. This information was disappointing for KAS,

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<sup>5</sup> See <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-manuals-and-guidelines>

which reportedly had high expectations from the hands-on exchange, which were not possible due to restrictions. Generally, interviewed stakeholders both on KAS and Statistics Sweden's side emphasized that the remote engagement is difficult due to the capacity constraints on KAS's end but also constraints for Statistics Sweden to provide more comprehensive hands-on support remotely, which then proved to be insufficient for such an extensive and complex task. One of the reasons for that is the fact that remote meetings and exchanges were much shorter than face-to-face interactions (i.e., up to two hours of discussion remotely as opposed to a physical mission organized for several days with full person-day/s of work in person, which allows ample time for exchange, discussions, and issue resolution).

Finally, the project also supported the production of the *Community Production Survey (PRODCOM)* by assisting KAS in developing an updated questionnaire in line with EU regulations. KAS planned to launch the questionnaire into production by spring of 2020 but postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. KAS eventually launched the questionnaire in June 2021 for PRODCOM 2020, and the results were published in December 2021.

### **3.2.2 Assessment of Project's contribution to establishment of social statistics indicators and preparations for a population register and for implementation of 2021 population census (Result 2)**

***Finding 4.** The project's contributions to the establishment of social statistics indicators and development of gender indicators have been effective, resulting in a set of social indicators, the SILC and a set of gender indicators which resulted in the publications of Gender Equality Index and SILC data for the first time in Kosovo. The support to preparation for a population register was affected by challenges in terms of cooperation with other Kosovo agencies (e.g., Agency of Civil Registration), which hindered the full potential of the population register at this stage. The KAS is preparing for the 2021 population census, and the plan is to implement it during 2022.*

One of the areas of cooperation between Statistics Sweden and KAS was focusing on enhancing the social statistics and preparation of the Population Register and the Census. The design of project support interventions started from the premise of potential to establish and implement a Demography Management System by interlinking all population registers, which are the responsibility of different Kosovo institutions, such as the National Institute of Public Health, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Ministry of Health and the Agency of Civil Registration (CRA), etc. KAS has been working on nurturing the collaboration with these institutions to ensure unobstructed data interoperability throughout the period of

implementation of the project. Particularly relevant for KAS, was to gain access to the data from the CRA, to ensure that wider demographic data can be analyzed. In this regard, KAS signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with CRA for data exchange, despite the fact that the data shared so far is limited to births, deaths and marriages only, that were published as of March 2021<sup>6</sup>. However, wider set of CRA data<sup>7</sup> were not possible to obtain despite the MoU, due to legislative provisions regarding confidentiality of data. The project team and KAS organized several bilateral meetings with CRA to clear out any legal obstacles, but no advancement was made thus far. KAS and the project have prepared a roadmap and are following its implementation, however the relations with CRA remain a challenge for KAS affecting the extent to which full social indicator data is possible to collect and publish, but also as a basis for preparation of the census.

KAS's work on statistics on income and living conditions (SILC) and Gender Equality Index was an ongoing effort, supported by a number of projects, notably IPA MB 2017 and the World Bank. The support to KAS for SILC 2018, 2019, 2020 was provided by IPA MB 2017 in coordination with the World Bank and the project; Statistics Sweden supported SILC by providing technical assistance to KAS and combined efforts resulted in the first national publication of SILC in 2021<sup>8</sup>. The first SILC did not include all desired indicators, but stakeholders agree that it is a good foundation for next rounds of SILC. The SILC data was sent successfully to Eurostat, which in turn published a range of indicators for Kosovo, regarding the core objectives of the SILC such as poverty indicators with gender breakdown, which exist but only in certain specific areas. Following this publication, the project embarked on the preparation of the SILC 2021, in line with Eurostat instructions (doc 65). The support mainly focuses on assisting KAS to interpret the Eurostat instructions and assistance to update the SILC questionnaire. The support interventions on SILC were

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<sup>6</sup> [Birth, Death, Marriage and Divorce Statistics, February 2021 | \(rks-gov.net\)](https://rks-gov.net/en/birth-death-marriage-and-divorce-statistics-february-2021)

<sup>7</sup> More detailed personal data (e.g. age, gender, place of birth, citizenship, etc.)

<sup>8</sup> According to project reports, the deadline for the transmission of data was the end of November 2019. In a late stage of the SILC data compilation, KAS, with the support of IPA MB 2017, encountered that the quality in the SILC data was lower than expected. The SILC is a complex survey and it is hard to do it for the first time. The work to remediate this led to delays of the data transmission. KAS conducted the transmission in late January. Eurostat returned with comments on the data quality, which the IPAMB 2017 supported KAS to remediate so that KAS could transmit the data a second time.

a good example of complementarity and coordination between the IPA MB 2017 and Statistic Sweden, ensuring adequate utilization of available assistance. World Bank supported and collaborated with Statistic Sweden as well, with both the acting CR, when it comes to SILC.

The Project support for calculating the indicators for the Gender Equality Index (GEI) was well-targeted and useful. The Project worked with KAS to develop the indicators and to work with the Agency for Gender Equality (AGE) to transmit indicators for a partial gender equality index to AGE, based on the data sources available in Kosovo. The European gender equality index has multiple dimensions of focus, not all of which are collected in Kosovo. The EU GEI covers eight core domains: work, money, knowledge, time, power, health, violence against women and intersecting inequalities, and there are all together 31 indicators used in all EU countries, some of the indicators, AGE has published but all data is not there. At the time of the evaluation, the KAS finalized the indicators for GEI. Besides, KAS trains enumerators for census that will take place in 2022 and for the household study. Stakeholders noted that one of the challenges for enumerates is a lack of training in gender equality and how to approach a collection of data for the GEI indicators. This is an outstanding area of support.

Finally, Statistics Sweden also worked with KAS on Statistics on Labor costs (SLC), though this support was mainly advisory, focusing on assisting KAS with a description of the principles to construct the survey frame. The frame of LCS consists of enterprises, which KAS has access to via the statistical business register (SBR), and public institutions that are not included in the SBR. Statistics Sweden engaged the SSO in North Macedonia to provide hands-on support KAS to develop a questionnaire, whereby a mission of the North Macedonian SSO was organized. Document review and stakeholder interviews highlight that KAS took leadership in this area, with limited advisory engagement of the project, with sampling being conducted in 2021. As per the data provided in the 2021 annual report, KAS prepared and piloted the Labour Cost Survey (LCS) questionnaire. The pilot provided inputs for some changes for the summing LCS data collection to ensure that KAS can use

the questionnaire to transmit data to Eurostat according to EU *acquis*. KAS also prepared the theory of the frame for LCS to conduct the sampling.<sup>9</sup>

### 3.2.3 Assessment of the project's contribution to improvement of capacity to use metadata system (Result 3)

**Finding 5.** *The project's contributions to the improvement and presentation of metadata have brought some improvements of IT structures for management and presentation of datasets and manuals. The project contributed to an increase in capacity of the KAS IT departments to design, launch and maintain KAS'S IT tools (e.g. website, software, dashboards, cyber security, drafting passport policy, removeable media policy, standard operating policy, policies and procedures for information systems etc.) by enhancing data availability, dissemination and visibility for public users, and specific support to the department of Economics and social statistics. There is advancement on the metadata 40 EMSM and ESQRS metadata have been published. With regards to KAS'S Metadata in EUROSTAT, the situation hasn't changed since the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual report, according to the last report received<sup>10</sup>. However, the metadata is still not functional, and the Ministries and authorities are not reporting as per required routine, as emphasized by interviewed stakeholders.*

One of important KAS areas of responsibility is to maintain a standardized Metadata system based on the Eurostat Metadata classification and structure. Metadata includes diverse types of information that is needed to be able to use and interpret statistics, by giving definitions of populations, objects, variables, methodology and quality. The project aimed to assist KAS to develop this system (both structural and reference metadata) and also to improve data collection systems (CAPI and CAWI). Along with this intervention, the project was tasked to supply KAS with the necessary IT and technical equipment, to assist the institution in maintaining and upgrading its metadata system.

The project embarked in support of the development of the systems by conducting an assessment of the Metadata at KAS, which served as the basis for further support. The assessment provided an overview of gaps and areas where support would be needed, and the project worked on several issues, including support to the IT systems; advancement of metadata platforms and capacity building of IT teams within KAS to

<sup>9</sup> Annual report 2021, Page 25-26.

<sup>10</sup> Bi-Annual Report 2021, Page 8

apply different IT methods and systems for metadata processing (e.g., for MICS or other types of surveys).

One of the important areas of support provided to KAS was to upgrade the website in a more user-friendly format and to generate user-friendly and easily accessible applications. Besides, the project also supported the KAS to produce more accessible interactive data sets by providing a set of tools for automatically importing and visualizing data, which resulted in more visible and user-friendly datasets, some of which were presented for the first time in Kosovo or the region (e.g., an interactive map of exports from Kosovo). Interviewed stakeholders remarked that these maps assisted KAS to enhance its credibility and have been very useful for KAS users to be able to dynamically customize the view according to their needs for better analysis and decision-making.

Other useful support to KAS was provided for the calculation of various data<sup>11</sup>, preparation and launching of dashboards and finalization and facilitation of various KAS Reports (e.g., quarterly reports for Index of Production Prices<sup>12</sup>, etc).

Also, substantial contribution through supporting two KAS departments (Economics and Social Statistics) by producing queries, and aggregation of data for publishing the report on average salaries in the Public and Private sectors for eight years retrospectively.

In particular useful support was provided for capacity strengthening of the KAS IT section regarding several aspects of IT (including, for instance, cyber security; the use of various software; the satisfaction survey; or statistical training). In light of COVID-19, the project team responded swiftly moving training online using Online Udemy Training tools, which facilitated access to capacity building in new circumstances for the staff. Importantly, these efforts advanced data security systems for KAS and raised awareness on how to provide data through internet-based platforms. As a result, Public PGP keys were designed to assist KAS in exchanging

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<sup>11</sup> E.g., data relating to VAT (Value Added Tax); CM - Statement of pension contributions and remittance form; CD – Corporate Tax Declaration; IS - Quarterly Advance Payment for Small Individual Business; QS - Quarterly Advance Payment for Small Corporate, etc.

<sup>12</sup> Indeks i cmimeve te prodhimit <<https://ask.rks-gov.net/sq/agjencia-e-statistikave-te-kosoves/add-news/indeksi-i-cmimeve-te-prodhimit-icp-tm2-2020>>

sensitive and encrypted data with EUROSTAT and other relevant actors in a safe manner. In addition, the project has supported the dissemination office and the whole KAS with a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) on communication protocol and has assisted KAS in preparing the development of online User Satisfaction Surveys (USS) and Staff Satisfaction Surveys (SSS). The IPA MB project supported this area as well, and there was an agreement between the project and the IPA MB team to ensure synergies and avoid overlaps.

However, the metadata system is still not functional, despite efforts, and further efforts are needed to bring it up to speed in terms of IT availability and capacities. Besides, KAS encounters problems in obtaining data from ministries and other agencies and authorities, which diminishes its potential, and has implications on the progress of the project.

#### **3.2.4 Assessment of the project's contribution to the strengthening of institutional mechanisms for planning and coordination of the national statistical system (Result 4)**

***Finding 6.** The project's contributions to strengthening institutional mechanisms for planning and coordination of the national statistical system have been affected by staff turnover in the project and also the KAS's demand to change some of the planned activities within the component. The project contributions were relatively effective, leading to some improvements, however, many support areas demand further attention. The project was supported with electronic training material and a webinar for methodologies for questionnaire design and issues on producing price statistics. Also, a study visit to the Central Statistic Bureau of Latvia was carried out.*

A number of training activities were envisaged to be implemented within this project component to assist KAS's mechanisms for planning and coordination. The component was envisaged to include a number of demands-driven capacity strengthening interventions, which would assist KAS in their targeted capacity needs. This component was affected by staff turnover, with changes of team leaders, but also changing demands by KAS regarding respective support interventions. Statistics Sweden delivered a number of training devoted to improving KAS's methodological issues (e.g. training on price statistics during COVID-19; methodology for data editing; Electronic Training Course with follow up live seminar on questionnaire design and testing; Electronic Training Course and Webinar focusing on introduction to Gender Statistics) or delivery of products (e.g. Proposal for a model for monitoring (testing questionnaires based on risk and allocation of resources; Methodology description on interviewing techniques; or Routine for Monitoring of Interviewers).

The review of project documentation and stakeholder interviews noted that the project responded to KAS's demands for training in various areas, including data editing, questionnaire design on methodology on price statistics, etc. The project also organized a study tour to Latvia for key KAS staff. Latvia was chosen because of the well-established country NSS in which the CSB takes the leading role and as a country that in population size is similar to Kosovo. The study tour was assessed as very useful for KAS to build their capacity and to establish links and networks with Latvian partners. Due to COVID-19, the training was moved online, a shift that was not perceived as optimal by KAS teams, due to resource and skills limitations.

Within this component, support was envisaged for the KAS in preparing a roadmap (strategy) document to improve the coordinated National Statistical System (NSS). However, KAS considered that this objective was redundant since it is already de facto covered by the current Statistical Program 2018-2022, so this intervention was replaced by demanded support for the development of two administrative instructions<sup>13</sup> concerned with the protection and confidentiality of statistical data and commissioned services (sale of statistical data). The two draft administrative orders were submitted to the Government for comments and final approval. Due to government change, the administrative instructions have yet not been adopted. The interviews confirmed that there is a need for more contribution and a continuous dialogue between the project and KAS concerning the strategic priorities of KAS in order to improve the NSS and the coordination system.

### **3.2.5 Assessment of Project's contribution to building the overall capacity and resilience of KAS**

**Finding 7.** *The project contributed to some extent to strengthening of the overall capacity and resilience of KAS. However, the results of the work of the project when it comes to training plans and strengthening more sustainable capacity through hiring interns was not very effective, beyond individual level. The internships were important for individual trainees but did not bring more long-term institutional capacity for KAS, by enforcing KAS human resources as none of the trainees have been retained. The Training plan, which was envisaged as a building block of the*

<sup>13</sup> These administrative instructions are both added to the Law No. 06/L-058 on Amending and Supplementing Law No. 04/L-036 on Official Statistics.

*support to strengthen capacity and resilience of KAS has also not been fully operationalized.*

This component of the project encountered significant changes whereby four<sup>14</sup> out of eight activities were cancelled at the onset of project implementation, at the request of KAS management. The bulk of project's support to KAS was directed to hiring eight interns (trainees) to be placed within Economic Statistics, Population Register, Planning, Agriculture Statistics (Crops Statistics), Environment Statistics, Informal Economy, and Information Technology and Communication (two trainees were envisaged). Within the reference period, a total of six trainees have been hired and have already finalized their internships. The KAS and the project team requested approval of extension of two traineeships, which was rejected by Embassy because an internship duration should not exceed one year (as per Kosovo's legislation). The funds were reallocated for four additional new internship placements. Due to the COVID-19 restriction measures most of the interns worked remotely, which made it difficult for the managers to assess their performance and the value added to the KAS human resources enforcement in general. Besides, the remote work also did not provide sufficient support to interns to use the full potential of their internship for learning.

The project also delivered a staff survey on ***Organizational Culture, Leadership and Skill and Knowledge Needs***, as a needs assessment to be used as basis for the development of the Organizational Optimization Framework. The survey questionnaire was a complex tool with questions related to several activities of Result 5 (notably for A5.1. and A5.6) and resulted in a comprehensive overview of KAS staff satisfaction, perceptions of KAS work and areas where organizational culture and leadership could be improved.

Finally, the project supported the development of the Internal Training Function Model and Its Implementation Plan. This plan established the role, tasks and responsibilities of the training function within KAS and its relationships with the

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<sup>14</sup> The cancelled activities were: 5.1 "Developing the organizational optimization framework"; 5.3 "Improving internal communication processes"; 5.5 "Analysis of current skills and capacities"; and 5.7 "Developing cross-functional working groups"

managers and staff of KAS as well as the main steps for its implementation. However, thus far, the plan has still not been fully operationalized.

### 3.3 EFFECTIVENESS AND SUSTAINABILITY (EQ 3 AND EQ 7)

***Finding 8.*** *The Project was mostly effective in assisting KAS to increase skills to design, implement and disseminate statistical data in line with international standards (Immediate outcome 1). However, the evaluation could not find consistent evidence of Project's contributions to sustainable improvements of coordination and information sharing among stakeholders in the statistical sector (Immediate outcome 2).*

As elaborated in the above section on EQ 2, the project's success in accomplishing a number of outputs has been mixed, resulting in varying degrees of contribution to an increase of KAS's capacity to design, implement and disseminate statistical data. While key contributions were noted when it comes to SILC, gender equity index non-observed economy, and national accounts, results in most other areas were not so pronounced. Evidence collected through document review and stakeholder interviews highlighted significant outstanding capacity and resource gaps within KAS to be fully able to design, implement and disseminate statistical data. At the time of this evaluation, many of these results are relatively sustainable, yet still fragile. The success of many of these results is linked to the leadership and capacity of relevant KAS staff, who were able to fully absorb the shared knowledge and advisory and lead the production of relevant datasets. However, the wider KAS staff still encountered absorption capacity issues, as the project teams were not able to provide the full-fledged (hands-on support) that was originally planned. These are decisive factors for the sustainability potential of provided support.

Also, the project has lent support to KAS to establish and nurture coordination and information sharing among stakeholders in the statistical sector. However, such support was inconsistent and depended on the project team's availability and turnover of staff within the project, also being affected by staff turnover at KAS (including the most senior management), but also the general interest by the project to be engaged, as emphasized by most key interlocutors. The project's contributions were visible in terms of improved IT capacity and KAS visibility (via website and dashboards) and also some contributions to facilitating linkages between KAS and other national agencies. These interventions resulted in strengthening KAS's positioning as an important factor when it comes to statistics, yet KAS still struggles to obtain relevant datasets from other agencies for their own statistical analysis purposes. From this

point of view, these support interventions have not brought about sustainable changes.

### 3.3.1 Drivers and Hindering Factors

**Finding 9:** The growing demand for statistics to inform decision making processes in Kosovo and demands from EUROSTAT underpins the partnerships and assists continued relevance of the Project's work. Project internal hindering factors relate mostly to turnover of staff and due to lack of presence due to travel restrictions at the time of COVID on the side of Statistics Sweden. The most relevant hindrance was COVID-19 and the capacity within KAS to absorb the assistance that was provided remotely.

The Government and KAS continue being committed to undertake efforts to increase their skills and ability to design, implement and disseminate data in partnership with other stakeholders in the statistics sector. Adoption of the Program of the Official Statistics 2018-2022 has been one of the concrete actions in line with EU accession requirements. Government agencies are also declaratively committed to cooperating with KAS to exchange data. This commitment is, for instance, reflected in the MoU between the Civil Registry Agency and KAS; however, translating this commitment into action has been lagging in pace and there are gaps remaining to be filled. Evidence points to a strong momentum for reforms of the statistics in Kosovo, after 20 years of externally supported efforts and the project's capacity building efforts came in timely to respond to this momentum, by investing in supporting institutional development, even though the project results vary.

**Choice of implementing partners and the project design have been the major drivers, although staff turnover, restrictions in travel and communication gaps between Statistics Sweden and FCG have created hindrances to delivery of project results.** The project has been envisaged as a joint effort of the EU and Sida; with two implementing partners and a set of needs-based interventions, each with its unique value added. Statistics Sweden has had a long cooperation with KAS since its establishment in early 2000s, providing stable and continuous support. The engagement of Statistics Sweden was envisaged as important peer-to-peer support intervention, which was expected to bring important and sustainable capacity outcomes on the side of KAS. Besides, FCG, as a consulting company, brought relevant IT and management experience, combined with the ability to produce a set of deliverables in a timely manner.

The two partners were supposed to work together on some result areas (R3), while the other results were divided among the partners. The FCG was tasked with the overall

management of the project. However, both partners encountered significant staff turnover which affected the project implementation but also affected relations with KAS. These challenges were exacerbated by COVID-19, which caused travel restrictions, resulting in inability of SCB experts to travel to Kosovo and provide hands-on support to KAS as anticipated. The project was agile in moving online, however, this move, created difficulties for some KAS departments to not only fully embrace and benefit from online exchange due to technical constraints, but also resistance by some KAS staff to proactively participate in such online work.

On the other side, SCB staff implemented some online activities, but their duration and depth of engagement varied as emphasized by key informants, providing at times insufficient support. Some challenges in terms of communication between SCB and FCG have been noted. The two partners come from completely different perspectives of development aid, each with its perception and approach to the support interventions. In addition, KAS had built its expectations from the project based on its long-standing experience in engaging with SCB. The SCB philosophy and approach is to assist KAS in improving their work processes, with KAS in the driving seat, which can entail longer-term engagement to enable incremental change to occur. From that perspective, the road to results may be slower and envisaged some activities to be implemented by KAS on their own. The FCG perceives the project as a set of deliverables which need to be produced within a given timeframe. The difference in perception raises frustration with the slower pace of delivery of results.

The DoA relatively clearly presents the division of tasks and responsibilities between project partners/Project Implementation Unit (PIU). However, stakeholder interviews indicate that there remain ambiguities when it comes to tasks and the timelines for submission and response to formal requests, etc. Besides, document review and stakeholder interviews highlight that the project shares reports with KAS and EUOK. However, as per government agreement, timesheets from Statistics Sweden are not shared with partners, while also KAS informed that they do not receive mission reports, which is viewed by KAS as an area that demands greater transparency.

**Joining efforts with EU and other donor projects contribute to coherence, effectiveness and value addition to donor aid.** There is ample evidence of the project's efforts to partner with other development partners or projects to ensure that there are no overlaps, but also to ensure that the efforts are better targeted. For instance, the project coordinated closely with IPA MB 2017 and IPA MB 2018 projects to ensure that there is no overlap between respective interventions. This came in handy at the time of COVID-19 restrictions when Statistics Sweden experts could not travel, so the two MB projects could cover some important areas which demanded hands-on support. Besides, the Project cooperated with the World Bank and UNICEF

on a number of areas, notably social statistics and SILC. Such cooperation interventions boosted the achievement of results for KAS and also presented good examples of coherence and coordination.

COVID-19. Not just the project, but also the government and development partners' activities have been affected significantly by the pandemic. This led to most activities being put on hold, transitioned to virtual mode or slowed down leading to delays and challenges in providing support services to KAS. The project was implemented in a hybrid approach, with most Statistics Sweden activities taking place remotely, and most of FCG support provided in person resulting from local recruitment and use of national consultants. The ability of the project to have at least some physical presence was praised by interviewed stakeholders. COVID-19 restrictions affected the project to a great extent, as mentioned above, resulting in the situation where KAS was feeling left out because training or advisory sessions were organized online. The reasons for the lack of utility of online exchanges included, but were not limited to, difficulty in following or navigating such meetings due to language issues; tables and datasets being too huge to be shared or to be visible online; lack of technical skills or resistance by some KAS teams to benefit from such exchanges; and time inadequacy of interaction or training organized by Statistics Sweden.

**The absorption capacity of KAS to benefit from capacity-building interventions has been limited.** While KAS has been responsive to Project support interventions, the evaluation found a high level of dependence and expectation that the project would plug the gaps in their own capacities. This is a hindering factor particularly when it comes to the sustainability of achieved results.

**Staff turnover within the KAS** is also a challenge, particularly as some of the systems have not been established yet. With the staff turnover, capacity and knowledge are lost to the institution and processes are slowed down. For instance, there was a turnover of most senior KAS management (e.g., the previous CEO resigned from KAS), staff retirement, staff going on statutory leave, etc. With regard to this, KAS does not have a relevant handover or knowledge management system in place to ensure that staff turnover does not affect institutional knowledge loss. Another challenge has been the fact that within the latest government restructuring, KAS was moved under the Ministry of Finance, which is expected to have some implications on internal restructuring of the KAS in the upcoming period as well as may cause some further staff turnover.

**Length of service as a knowledge management factor** – high proportion of KAS staff have been in office since its establishment in the early 2000s and have accumulated knowledge, including also experience working with Statistics Sweden.

However, several key staff members are on the verge of retirement, which is expected to have big repercussions on knowledge management within KAS, due to the above-mentioned lack of organizational knowledge management system. Prompt recruitment of appropriately qualified people in the said positions, especially those with a strong statistics background may not be easy.

**Lack of Women in Management Positions at KAS.** There are women in management positions across different departments in KAS, albeit increased gender equality across ranks would have been beneficial. Considering the importance of the agency, the unequal participation of women and men in the decision-making processes at all levels at KAS is remarkable and exacerbates inequalities that often prevent women and minority groups from representing and fully contributing to planning and decision-making.

**Political changes and restructuring of the government affect the project as well.** The KAS positioning within the government structure changed with the political change, with KAS now positioned under the Ministry of Finance. The political changes have the potential to affect not only the stability of KAS but also of other agencies which engage in statistics (e.g., Ministries, line ministries, governmental agencies, etc.), which can have implications on meaningful engagement towards a NSS.

### 3.4 EFFICIENCY – CAN THE COSTS FOR EACH PROGRAM BE JUSTIFIED BY ITS RESULTS? (EQ 5 AND EQ 9)

***Finding 10.*** *The project's costs are not fully justified by its results, as some challenges remain with strategic allocations of project resources (mainly human resources) to achieve results.*

Evaluation found that the project budget has been healthy for support interventions envisaged under the DOA. However, the project implementation saw an uneven utilization of funds, some of which was caused by COVID-19 but also by underutilization of expert days. At the time of the evaluation, the project still has approximately 700 m/days that are underutilized for FCG allotment.

The project's organizational set up is complex, with implementation responsibility divided among two partners, as mentioned above. Despite the fact that DoA outlines clearly roles and responsibilities, whereby each partner has a long-term senior adviser, there are still misinterpretations when it comes to the clarity of roles in leadership and implementation of the project. Besides, there has been employee

turnover at the leadership level (notably turnover of five team leaders thus far)<sup>15</sup> which further affected the efficiency and consistency of the project. During COVID-19, partner relations were adversely impacted further due to reduced direct contact. Their different approaches to work and addressing the needs of KAS have significantly affected their relations, and resulted in implementation of activities in silos, which in turn affected the efficiency and coherence of the project, and delivery of results.

Both Statistics Sweden and FCG's in-country representatives have changed during the project implementation phase. The evaluation noted somewhat diminishing tasks of the newly appointed representative of Statistics Sweden, moving from more hands-on to strictly coordination role between KAS and Statistics Sweden teams. Such a position has been questioned by key interlocutors, from the utility and budget point of view, with emphasis on high costs for a position that could have essentially been filled by a local or more junior Statistic Sweden staff. On the other hand, KAS was engaged in the design agreed in such set up in line with the practices of Twinning projects. As noted in the Section 3.3.1 above, the COVID-19 restrictions affected the project efficiency leading to delays and challenges in terms of delivery of results across most project areas. Besides, as noted in Section 3.3.1 above, the staff turnover at KAS and the lack of KAS's technical ability to successfully switch to virtual mediums given the global pandemic also affected efficiency of the project. Besides, the project performance was affected by drastic revision of activities under result 5 by previous KAS management, whose reinstatement was then requested by the acting KAS CEO.

### 3.5 IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY ASSESMENT (EQ 6 AND 8)

***Finding 11.*** *This evaluation did not find concrete evidence of impact of the project thus far. It is too early in the implementation to measure impact, as impact is measured by the end of following the finalization of a project intervention.*

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<sup>15</sup> Divided as follows: 2 different Long Term Advisors for Statistics Sweden; 3 different Team Leaders for FCG Sweden

The project has brought several output-level results that have transformational potential. Notable examples are the social statistics, NOE, national accounts supply and use tables, SILC and gender statistics. These output level results have brought about progress in terms of availability of sound statistics in Kosovo. However, the changes in terms of KAS's capacity to produce sound data and the use of the data are incremental making it difficult to assess the extent to which KAS will, in short to medium term be able to carry out its core activities in a standardized and independent manner in line with EU standards. This depends also on factors such as the KAS staff composition and capacity; and the extent to which the project, in its current set up can deliver the agreed results due to travel restrictions that affect the extent to which Statistics Sweden can provide hands-on support which is demanded by KAS. Besides, catalytic potential of the project outputs also depends on the political situation in the country, which is still unstable. Kosovo is committed to EU accession and work towards fulfilling EU acquis requirements, but there are still outstanding key reforms, which depend, inter alia, on the availability of sound statistics/evidence base to ensure that measures are adequate to the needs.

***Finding 12.*** *The Evaluation found that the potential of the KAS and Statistics Sweden Peer-to-Peer Agency cooperation that in the past has a proven track record to some extent remains untapped in this project due to challenges brought by COVID-19 restrictions, which negatively affect project implementation.*

Cooperation between KAS and Statistics Sweden has been long-term and stable, spanning 20 years of continuous support to KAS's capacity development since its establishment. Until this project, the Agency-to-Agency cooperation worked well, and was characterized by open and fruitful exchange and hands-on support. In the first phase of the project, until COVID-19, the cooperation and capacity-building support were on track and led to the delivery of all planned outputs. However, once COVID-19 restrictions on travel were in place, Statistics Sweden could not provide full-fledged support, transitioning to virtual/digital modes. As noted above, this move was met with challenges as KAS could not fully benefit from remote assistance due to technical constraints and apparent resistance by some KAS staff to use remote tools. From that regard, the peer-to-peer agency cooperation between KAS and Statistics Sweden has not, thus far, fulfilled its full potential to assist the institutional building of KAS.

## 3.6 COHERENCE (EQ 10)

***Finding 13.*** *Internal coherence between two implementing partners has been constrained. Coherence with external partners has been optimal and contributed to important synergies and efficiencies for the project.*

The project design is comprehensive and conceptually provides for a coordination action towards building KAS institutional capacity to fulfil its mandate. It covers both thematic support interventions and wider horizontal support to KAS to be able to do so. The two implementers are each responsible for their respective activities and outcomes according to a defined division of labor. As noted in the DoA, “in order to ensure coordination, the Service Contractor Team Leader will act as the overall Program Manager who will lead the whole program in all practical matters, with tasks such as coordinated reporting to Sida, including financial reporting, and coordinating all activities.”<sup>16</sup> These two partners represent two different types of institutions, with Statistics Sweden applying Agency-to-Agency capacity development support, while FCG focuses on structured delivery of envisaged outputs. Such difference in approach lead to a rather siloed and vertical approach without much coherence to implementation of the project, as corroborated by stakeholder interviews which emphasize the situation whereby the different components do not show any cross-component synergies or coherence. Frequent changes of team leaders of both implementing partners’ teams did not contribute to building synergies between the implementing partners themselves and between the project in general and KAS.

The project has been quite open and ready to cooperate with external partners. Notable efforts to coordinate with the IPA 2017 Multi-Beneficiary Program were noted, in particular in the Result area 1, where the MB program had some overlaps with the project. This coordination resulted in coverage of some important support interventions, contributing to donor effectiveness, which may be a good example of collaborative coordination.

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<sup>16</sup> DOA, p. 45

## 3.7 CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

### 3.7.1 Assessment of project contributions to poverty reduction and gender equality (EQ 11 and EQ 14)

**Finding 14.** *There is no evidence of project's direct contribution to poverty reduction. Operational contributions to gender equality products are visible through availability of some of the indicators for Gender Equity Index and mainstreaming of some gender disaggregated statistics into wider statistics collection tools and datasets requirements, even if there is a potential for improvement.*

The project's focus on strengthening the institutional capacity of KAS has not included an analysis of how these investments will trigger spin-off results on wider vulnerability and poverty issues. The project, however, invested in a range of social and economic statistics areas, which once collected and adequately analyzed will shed light on the state of the Kosovo population, including poverty issues. This data will also serve as an evidence base for the development of national policies, which should, in a wider sense have a positive effect on poverty reduction. A review of project reports points to the project's recognition of the importance of the linkages, albeit without consistent examples of how the project contributes beyond a general level. For instance, the reports note that *"the project contributes to more data about the living conditions of Kosovars, mainly based on the Survey Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) that KAS reported to Eurostat"*.

The review of the project DOA shows that this document had no elaborated gender considerations. However, evidence shows that the project and KAS have invested efforts to mainstream gender into statistics processes, particularly when it comes to social and business statistics. Besides, with the support of the project, KAS has developed Gender equality Index, which was flagged as one of important results of KAS's work. The project also conducted a Gender Statistics webinar that included provision of gender-disaggregated statistics, as well as the production of gender specific outputs and studies wherever possible. When an institution aims to work with gender statistics and to promote gender data, it is important to consider gender institutionally. Experience has demonstrated that how an institution views and works with gender internally (institutional) also reflects how well the organization implements gender externally (operational). Hence, the ET proposes that both levels of institutional gender performance and operational gender projects should be addressed.

Review of project documentation reveals that no gender analysis for the project has been carried out not institutionally nor operationally (programmatically) was carried

out in the beginning of the project<sup>17</sup>. In all Sida projects, a gender analysis should be carried out in the beginning of the project<sup>18</sup>. Contributions that do not include a gender analysis in planning risk reinforcing existing gender-based discrimination, leading in turn to negative impacts on social and economic development.

According to the gender law of Kosovo, all ministries, agencies and municipalities need to have a gender equality officer.<sup>19</sup> Currently, the responsibilities of a gender equality officer is held by three persons - one responsible for gender equality index, one for gender-based violence survey and another for the gender publication in Kosovo.

### **3.7.2 Assessment of the extent to which the project was designed and implemented in conflict sensitive manner and in accordance with the rights perspective (EQ 12 and EQ 13)**

***Finding 15.*** Evaluation found that the project could have done more to sufficiently include target groups (KAS team) in project planning, implementations and follow up. The project was generally implemented in conflict sensitive manner.

<sup>17</sup> It considers a small aspect of gender equality in two categories which is a good start but requires further attention. The review shows that "R" stands for representation, but not representation in categories like representation at Management level, or in decision making. Representation is quantitative, and even if the simplest form of gender analysis is considered, the 3 R method that is used in the Swedish Feminist Foreign Policy: Rights, Representation and Resources. This cover only a small part of representation and not rights or resources. Representation should answer questions like context analysis how is the situation in the country, national statistics on gender (E.g. Inactivity rate, unemployment etc.), in the area and who benefits from this project? Who decides? Who influences? Does Sida support reach both men and women equally with their support. Sida has six categories in their gender analysis 1. Sex-Quantitative (Could be seen as Representation), 2. Gender-Norms, 3. Resources, 4. Intersectionality, 5. Strategical and practical needs, 6. Triple roles

<sup>18</sup> Please check. "Gender analysis is mandatory in all Sida contributions." Page 3. See Gender Tool Box Brief: How Sida works with Gender Equality from November 2020. If EU have 56% of the project contribution it has to be negotiated, though there are also EU requirements and gender aspects in the acquis to consider. One of the basic ones is the Charter of Fundamental Rights, Article 23, European Union, Equality between women and men must be ensured in all areas and activities, including employment, work and pay

<sup>19</sup> Kosovo Law of Gender Equality (LGE) Article 12 paragraph 1. There is a legal obligation to have gender disaggregated data per LGE by the gender division of all data and collected statistical information shall be recorded, registered, processed and shall be obliged to submit these data to the Kosovo Agency of Statistics. Which would suggest KAS to handle and process the data, which is the Chief of Population Sector

Evaluation found that there were efforts to engage with KAS in consultations in the design of the DOA for this project, which resulted in the Action that largely responded to their needs. KAS is also included in the Project Steering committee as an active decision maker, which helped the institution to steer the process and promote the needs and demands for project support. The consultations with KAS resulted in a number of changes/adjustments in the Project to accommodate to KAS needs. Examples of such changes are the changes in the Component 5 (cancelling a number of activities, because they were deemed not necessary by KAS), the revision of Component 4. Plan to replace the delivery of a Roadmap with the delivery of administrative instruction etc.; or approval of the request for more interns. Nevertheless, a large number of interviewed stakeholders noted the outstanding need to further engage KAS to steer the process, to ensure that the support interventions respond to their needs. Besides, stakeholders emphasized that the project did not take sufficient measures to respond to the changing needs of KAS during the implementation of the project in light of COVID-19. On the other side, document review and interviews with implementing partners showed that the project did apply several mitigating measures (e.g. purchasing the e-notebooks/laptops to help KAS relevant staff to operate online; local recruitment, partnering with other IPA Projects or regional experts; while the Key Expert 3, being based in Pristina and being almost always physically present in KAS, provided hands-on assistance to KAS on different IT needs quite beyond his ToR.

One shortcoming that was found is the fact that, while all written produced material is written in Albanian and English, only a small portion of it was translated into Serbian. According to the Kosovo legislation, all officially published information should be in Albanian, Serbian and English.

The project took into account a range of sensitivities, including confidentiality of data, conflict sensitivity and other related aspects in their support intervention. In particular, notable efforts were taken to ensure that all questionnaires designed with the support of the project include various aspects (including gender-disaggregated data) for example SILC, Gender Equality Index and KAS satisfaction survey that would enhance the utility of collected data to understand better contextual issues in Kosovo. However, the ET found that the documents produced by the project were not translated into Serbian language which hinders the outreach of such documents to a wider range of stakeholders.

# 4 Evaluative Conclusions

## 4.1 CONCLUSIONS

This section provides a set of conclusions derived from the evaluation process, relating to the relevance of the Project; its specific contributions to outcomes; and efficiency of the project performance.

### *Relevance*

**C1: The project's strategic directions of investing in direct support to capacity strengthening of KAS are highly appropriate and remain so in light of Kosovo's developmental and EU integration status.** The project design includes a set of capacity building interventions that are well aligned with government priorities, Kosovo EU integration priorities to bring KAS closer to EU standards, and responsive to priority needs of KAS. The project has helped KAS with capacity development services. Nonetheless, the shift from hands-on to remote engagement due to COVID-19 has caused shift in approaches by project implementing partners and a set of discrete interventions which were considered as less useful for KAS. This shift caused challenges for relevance of the project to KAS needs.

### *Specific contributions to Project outcomes and their sustainability*

**C2: Output level results ensuing from support to statistics (SILC and gender index data, sectorial business statistics, national accounts and non-observed economy) and upgrade of IT systems have been positive. The challenge is to ensure that outcome level results transform into more sustainable outcome level results towards increased institutional capacity at KAS to collect and analysis the data without external support. Other project intervention areas delivered partial results.**

The project effectively supported KAS to enhance its skills and improve the quality of statistics systems relating to SILC and gender index data, sectorial business statistics, national accounts, and data on non-observed economy and improvement of metadata system, documentation and dissemination. The support was provided through continuous advisory support, though the intensity and depth of this support reduced since COVID-19 restrictions were put in place. Besides, the project effectively assisted the KAS to enhance availability of data online which in turn resulted in higher visibility of KAS's work and its profile. The project focused on building KAS capacity, but in some aspects, it still had a somewhat substitution role which brought short term results but challenged the opportunity to sustainably increase the actual capacity of KAS.

The project did not succeed thus far to contribute substantially to National accounts, the population register or increased KAS's coordination and strategic planning capacity. The engagement in institutional capacity has assisted KAS to advance with implementation of its mandate, yet its results are still not sustainable. Their sustainability prospects are hindered by challenges such as KAS's institutional bottlenecks (institutional capacity and commitment, and readiness to take over and scale up the supported interventions) or wider legal obstacles to exchange and perusal of data. Such shortcomings also point to the need for the project to revamp and reinforce its hands-on support to KAS as well as internal coherence.

The project has contributed to mainstreaming gender into statistics despite the fact that not all dimensions of EU GEI are covered. Given the nature and the context of this project, thus far direct contributions to poverty, stronger rights and equality consideration are not readily visible whereas project's indirect contribution could only be seen well beyond the end of the project. All these areas require further attention.

The project has encountered coherence and inter-component cooperation shortcomings which affected the delivery of long-term results. At the same time, the project's proactive and positive partnerships and engagement with other EU funded projects and other development partners e.g., WB and UNICEF brought some efficiencies and ensured avoidance of overlaps.

### *Efficiency*

**C5: Project efficiency was affected by turnover of staff, COVID-19 restrictions and tensions within the project.** Over the project implementation, numerous challenges emerged in terms of project operationalization through combining agency-to-agency (Statistics Sweden-KAS) and technical service delivery (by FCG), i.e., two bringing their distinct expertise (technical on the one side and capacity building, organizational development, and IT on the other) under one project umbrella. While conceptually such a combination has the potential to facilitate the delivery of results in complex settings, it proved to also bring challenges for implementation due to different natures, approaches and work philosophies. Besides, issues were noted with uncertain role of the FCG TL vis-à-vis SCB.

The DoA stipulated this position to be the overall program manager, but this was not possible to operationalize. So, without clear leadership over these two entities, the work of which many times converged, led to instances where sight of the collective aim was lost. Such differences created tensions, which were exacerbated during COVID-19 caused travel restrictions, in turn affecting the efficiency of the project. Lack of possibility of SBC to travel during COVID-19 restrictions created challenges for KAS to benefit from support, which was also not as intensive in virtual mode, as it would have been should it have been provided in person. The project has been challenged by significant staff turnover and silo approach in implementation of its activities, along with communication issues between the Statistics Sweden and FCG. The project operationalization did not include development of SOP

beyond the DoA or project implementation manual, which could have helped further operationalize the above mentioned leadership and other roles and communication tools. These challenges affect the efficiency challenges **and overall fitness for purpose of the Project to respond to KAS's needs.**

### *Cross cutting Issues*

**C 6: Cross cutting issues (poverty, rights approach, gender quality) have not been sufficiently considered in the design and implementation of the project.** The project did work with KAS to develop gender equality indicators for the GEI, which is a contribution to better understanding of gender dimension of development of Kosovo. However, poverty or rights approaches are not sufficiently elaborated or followed by the project. Besides, project's contribution to these aspects is only implicit.

No gender analysis was carried out in the beginning of the project, despite it being mandatory by Sida. When it comes to conflict sensitivity, despite the legal requirement, the produced reports or data are not systematically translated into all languages.

## 4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The suggested recommendations for the project are summarized in Table 2 below. The recommendations focus on seeking a stronger focus on delivery of results taking into account underlying factors that facilitate/hinder achievement of results. The majority of recommendations are directed to the project implementing partners but also to KAS and the donors.

**TABLE 2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

#	Recommendation	Responsible institutions	Timeframe
1.	<p><b>Revise and update the Project's results framework to reflect the needs of the KAS and realistic possibilities of project partners in light of continued COVID-19 restrictions and other contextual issues, with consideration of the need for Non-Cost Extension</b></p> <p>While some of the activities are on track, the challenges brought by COVID 19 have resulted in some implementation delays. Project partners should embark in a process of revision of the project results framework to ensure that the evolving developmental needs of KAS are met, with a focus on finalizing the outstanding Program activities. It is important to prioritize the completion of these activities. The results framework should include a set of interventions which are realistic and feasible in light of continued COVID-19 restrictions and other contextual issues pertaining operations of implementation partners.</p> <p>Operational steps are provided in sub-recommendations below:</p> <p>1.1 The KAS and implementing partners should have an internal session to discuss needs and areas of interventions which would be needed in the</p>	Statistics Sweden and FCG in cooperation with KAS	March – May 2022

#	Recommendation	Responsible institutions	Timeframe
	<p>upcoming period, and the need for potential Non-Cost extension to ensure that all planned activities are implemented.</p> <p>1.2 Each implementing partner should internally reflect on the possibilities and option for implementation in conjunction with activities implemented by other development partners (IPA MB 2017 and 2018, World Bank, UNICEF, etc.) as preparation for the strategic planning session.</p> <p>1.3 The strategic planning session should also focus on exploring synergies and coherence among components to ensure that the project follows its holistic approach to institutional development of KAS.</p> <p>1.4 Following the strategic planning session, internal process of reflection and planning of tasks for the two implementing partners can be organized. This session should allow safe and conducive space for both implementing partners (SBC and FCG) in the first round and together with the donors (Sida and EUOK) to discuss roles and bottlenecks and to agree on next phase of implementation and respective division of tasks.</p>		
2.	<p><b>Ensure that the Statistic Sweden's capacity strengthening and advisory efforts are tailor made to allow for full coverage of themes in remote format</b></p> <p>In light of potential continued travel restrictions, the Statistics Sweden should reconsider its capacity strengthening and advisory strategies for KAS to take into account fully their absorption limitations when it comes to remote methods. This process should result in more tailored made contextualized approach which is more responsive to actual KAS capacity to ensure that KAS partners can actually benefit from such efforts.</p>	Statistics Sweden and KAS in cooperation with donors	March – May 2022
3.	<p><b>Project implementing partners should cooperate and share their training and advisory reports with all project partners in line with transparency and accountability principles</b></p> <p>Project partners should share activity (training, advisory, peer-exchange) reports as an immediate follow up of the activity. These reports should contain an overview of covered themes, learning resources, recommendations and/or action points for both KAS and the partners as a standard practice.</p>	Statistics Sweden and FCG	Next phase of the project
4.	<p><b>Continue empowering KAS to take more leadership role in the project planning, implementation and monitoring</b></p> <p>KAS should be empowered to play a more active role as the direct beneficiary of the project. In this regard, KAS should become more familiar with project management procedures and project results. KAS staff should be more proactive in so far as providing direct inputs to project reports, rather than being a passive recipient of these reports.</p>	Steering Committee	Before next phase is planned
5.	<p><b>Further elaborate the SOP and project implementation approaches stipulated in the DoA</b></p> <p>Communication and information sharing between KAS, implementing partners, SIDA and EU should be brought to optimal level, to ensure smooth and successful project implementation. To boost this, the partners should further discuss and update the SOP and/or project implementation approaches</p>	Sida, KAS, FCG	Before next phase is planned

#	Recommendation	Responsible institutions	Timeframe
	stipulated in the DOA, including all operational, timelines, responsibilities elements to guide implementing partners throughout the implementation. This will help clarify all outstanding unclarities.		
6.	<b>Develop an institutional gender development plan.</b> It would be advisable to carry out a gender audit at KAS, with the aim of having a gender equality picture of the institution, that would lead to a strategy and plan for KAS, to guarantee that Swedish support will reach both men and women and to make the workplace open and inclusive, also considering intersectionality - with the focus on gender: frameworks, resources, knowledge, communication, norms and systems. It is important to include the KAS gender focal person in all planning.	KAS, FCG	Before next phase is planned
7.	<b>Translate project (and KAS) products into Kosovo's official languages</b> The reports produced by the project should be presented in Albanian, Serbian and English. All information should be gender disaggregated.	Statistics Sweden, FCG, KAS	Throughout the lifecycle of the project
8.	<b>Actively integrate relevant best practices in employee retention. Understand and implement learning and developmental needs of staff.</b> The evaluation found that staff turnover and lack of institutional memory is a challenge for KAS. The KASS and the project partners should consider integrating actions to analyze best practices in employee retention and measures that were proven to be functional in other similar agencies in Kosovo and regionally. This analysis may inform devising the actions to assist KAS to implement learning and developmental needs of staff, which would in turn assist staff retention or attraction of new talent.	KAS and the Project	Throughout the lifecycle of the project

# Annex 1 – Evaluation matrix

#	Evaluation questions	Indicators	Data sources	Data collection techniques	Data analysis
<b>Relevance: Is the intervention doing the right thing?</b>					
EQ 1.	To what extent has the project conformed to the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries and donor policies?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Degree of matching between the Project objectives and the objectives outlined in Sida's and EU's strategies and plans</li> <li>• Degree of matching between the Project objectives and the overall objectives of KAS</li> <li>• Gender analysis performed before project start to guarantee that needs and priorities of all stakeholders were considered, if not why?</li> <li>• Beneficiaries needs and priorities considered</li> <li>• Perception of stakeholders (men and women) on the degree of alignment of the Project objectives and interventions with Sida's strategies and plans</li> <li>• Objectives of project are adapted to the KAS needs (e.g., in terms of selection of KAS priorities to be supported and outreach to KAS departments, TA approaches, etc.) based in comprehensive analysis of context and needs in specific areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SIDA policy documents</li> <li>• Project planning documents, reports and other materials</li> <li>• External sources</li> <li>• Qualitative data from KIIs from               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sida</li> <li>○ EUOK</li> <li>○ KAS</li> <li>○ Statistics Sweden</li> <li>○ Contractor</li> <li>○ Other relevant Government stakeholders</li> <li>○ Development partners</li> <li>○ AGE (Agency for Gender Equality)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews</p>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Qualitative iterative data analysis of the KIIs with key stakeholders</p> <p>Triangulation between data sources, data collection techniques, and data types according to principles of iterative analysis</p>
<b>Effectiveness: Is the intervention achieving its objectives?</b>					

EQ 2.	How effectively has the project built necessary capacity of people and institutions? How effectively has the project built national ownership and capacity? How likely the project will achieve its objectives in the second half of the project and what elements need to be taken into account to ensure sustainability of outcomes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of delivery of appropriate capacity-building activities (training, learning sessions, projects for men and women)</li> <li>• Evidence from pre-existing and quantitative gender disaggregated data regarding sufficient achievement of intended capacity-building outputs</li> <li>• Evidence of improved capacity of KAS to design, coordinate, and implement their tasks towards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sector statistics and National Accounts and Eurostat statistics</li> <li>○ Social Statistics indicators developed and population register prepared for the implementation of the 2021 population census</li> <li>○ metadata system, documentation and dissemination modernization of data collection methods</li> <li>○ Evidence that capacity strengthening interventions create observable changes in terms of fulfilment of KAS mandate and steps towards Copenhagen criteria</li> <li>○ Evidence of ownership over project results by KAS</li> <li>○ Stakeholder perceptions regarding likelihood for KAS to be able to institutionalize outcome level changes by the end of the project</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project planning documents, reports and other materials</li> <li>• External sources</li> <li>• Qualitative data from KIIs from <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sida</li> <li>○ EUOK</li> <li>○ KAS</li> <li>○ Statistics Sweden</li> <li>○ Contractor</li> <li>○ Senior Government stakeholders</li> <li>○ Development partners</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Document review  Semi-structured interviews	Document review  Qualitative iterative data analysis of the KIIs with key stakeholders  Triangulation between data sources, data collection techniques, and data types according to principles of iterative analysis
EQ 3.	To what extent have the project contributed to intended outcomes? If so, why? If not, why not?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of strengthened Planning and coordination of the statistical system within KAS</li> <li>• Stakeholder perceptions regarding each project results as having been achieved and contributing to overall positive change in</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project planning documents, reports and other materials</li> <li>• External sources</li> </ul>	Document review  Semi-structured interviews	Document review  Qualitative iterative data analysis of the KIIs with key stakeholders

		<p>terms of overall capacity and resilience of KAS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stakeholder perceptions regarding each project results as having been achieved and contributing to overall positive change in terms of data generation, dissemination and availability</li> <li>• Degree and type of drivers that promoted project implementation</li> <li>• Degree and type of hindering factors affecting project implementation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative data from KIIs from <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sida</li> <li>○ EUOK</li> <li>○ KAS</li> <li>○ Statistics Sweden</li> <li>○ Contractor</li> <li>○ Senior Government stakeholders</li> <li>○ Development partners</li> <li>○ AGE</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		<p>Triangulation between data sources, data collection techniques, and data types according to principles of iterative analysis</p>
EQ 4.	To what extent has lessons learned from what works well and less well been used to improve and adjust Program implementation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of integration of Project's monitoring data and institutional knowledge (lessons learned, reflection on results from the implementation of project thus far) in the adjustments of the project (also in light of COVID)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documents, reports and other materials</li> <li>• External sources</li> <li>• Monitoring data</li> <li>• Qualitative data from KIIs from <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sida</li> <li>○ EUOK</li> <li>○ KAS</li> <li>○ Statistics Sweden</li> <li>○ Contractor</li> <li>○ Senior Government stakeholders</li> <li>○ Development partners</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews</p>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Qualitative iterative data analysis of the KIIs with key stakeholders</p> <p>Triangulation between data sources, data collection techniques, and data types according to principles of iterative analysis</p>

<b>Efficiency – Can the costs for each program be justified by its results?</b>					
EQ 5.	Can the costs for the project be justified by its results? Have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve outcomes? What have been achieved so far? What are the major constraints so far? How can be explained the delay in delivery?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Degree of adequacy of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budgets</li> <li>Material</li> <li>Human resources</li> </ul> vis-à-vis the volume of tasks carried out</li> <li>Disbursement rates (expenditure vs. planned) per component and activity, per year</li> <li>Proportion of Project interventions that demonstrate implementation on schedule and per planned budget</li> <li>Stakeholder perceptions that the implementation of activities is sufficiently timely, efficient and appropriate to context requirements.</li> <li>Factors hindering or facilitating timely delivery of results (including special focus on COVID)</li> <li>Evidence of consideration of gender equality and equity principles in the project set up and implementation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documents, reports and other materials</li> <li>External sources</li> <li>Monitoring data</li> <li>Qualitative data from KIIs from <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sida</li> <li>EUOK</li> <li>KAS</li> <li>Statistics Sweden</li> <li>Contractor</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Document review  Semi-structured interviews	Document review  Qualitative iterative data analysis of the KIIs with key stakeholders  Triangulation between data sources, data collection techniques, and data types according to principles of iterative analysis
<b>Impact</b>					
EQ 6.	What is the overall impact of the Project in terms of direct or indirect, negative and positive results?	<p>Evidence and examples where Project output level results contributed to KAS capacities to carry out its core activities in a standardised and independent manner in line with EU standards</p> <p>Evidence of transformative potential of the Project in the manner in which the KAS mainstreams gender and equity issues in its</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documents, reports and other materials</li> <li>External sources</li> <li>Monitoring data</li> <li>Qualitative data from KIIs from <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sida</li> <li>EUOK</li> <li>KAS</li> <li>Statistics Sweden</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Document review  Semi-structured interviews	Document review  Qualitative iterative data analysis of the KIIs with key stakeholders  Triangulation between data sources, data collection techniques, and data types

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Contractor</li> <li>○ Senior Government stakeholders</li> <li>○ Development partners</li> </ul>		according to principles of iterative analysis
<b>Sustainability</b>					
EQ 7.	<p>Is it likely that the benefits (outcomes) of the project are sustainable?</p> <p>What are the prospects of KAS sustainably and independently maintaining the results of the project in the foreseeable future?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Will the institutional capacities built with support of the project remain after closeout?</li> <li>○ Will the products developed by the project be maintained?</li> <li>○ Will KAS function as intended? Is it likely that KAS will hire the inters?</li> </ul>	<p>Evidence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Concrete changes in KAS's policies, regulations, and plans that can sustain achieved project results.</li> <li>● Concrete plans to scale up pilot interventions.</li> <li>● Adoption of major lessons and good practices that lead to changes in the strategic and organizational direction of the KAS towards better supply of statistics services.</li> <li>● Additional allocations of national budget and/or other donor resources towards better supply of statistics services</li> <li>● Institutional capacity in place to sustain levels of achievement or a strategy/plan exists and funded.</li> <li>● Perceptions on sustainability by national stakeholders.</li> <li>● Demonstrated capacity and institutionalization of mechanisms to mainstream gender in KAS work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Documents, reports and other materials</li> <li>● External sources</li> <li>● Monitoring data</li> <li>● Qualitative data from KIIs from <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sida</li> <li>○ EUOK</li> <li>○ KAS</li> <li>○ Statistics Sweden</li> <li>○ Contractor</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews</p>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Qualitative iterative data analysis of the KIIs with key stakeholders</p> <p>Triangulation between data sources, data collection techniques, and data types according to principles of iterative analysis</p>
EQ 8.	Has the Agency-to-Agency cooperation between KAS and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Evidence and examples of utility and contribution of Agency-to-Agency cooperation between KAS and Statistics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Documents, reports, and other materials</li> </ul>	Document review	Document review

	Statistics Sweden served its purpose in institutional building capacity, in KAS, to sustainably administer the project results over time?	Sweden to assist sustainable results in terms of institutional capacity building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• External sources</li> <li>• Monitoring data</li> <li>• Qualitative data from KIIs from               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sida</li> <li>○ EUOK</li> <li>○ KAS</li> <li>○ Statistics Sweden</li> <li>○ Contractor</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Semi-structured interviews	<p>Qualitative iterative data analysis of the KIIs with key stakeholders</p> <p>Triangulation between data sources, data collection techniques, and data types according to principles of iterative analysis</p>
EQ 9.	<p>Was the project's staffing strategy implemented as intended? Did it serve its purpose in building sustainable institutional capacity in the target organizations?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Appointment of Swedish Experts</li> <li>○ Counterpartship and gradual retraction of Swedish hands-on support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Degree of utility and value-added of project's staffing strategy to provide the best expertise to KA, specifically:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Appointment of Swedish Experts</li> <li>○ Counterpartship and gradual retraction of Swedish hands-on support</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Evidence and examples of contributions of Swedish experts and hands-on support to building sustainable institutional capacity in the target organization</li> <li>• Stakeholder perception of utility and value-added of Swedish expertise to build sustainable institutional capacity in the target organizations</li> <li>• Influence and decision-making power men and women have in the project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documents, reports and other materials</li> <li>• External sources</li> <li>• Monitoring data</li> <li>• Qualitative data from KIIs from               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sida</li> <li>○ EUOK</li> <li>○ KAS</li> <li>○ Statistics Sweden</li> <li>○ Contractor</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews</p>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Qualitative iterative data analysis of the KIIs with key stakeholders</p> <p>Triangulation between data sources, data collection techniques, and data types according to principles of iterative analysis</p>
<b>Coherence</b>					
EQ 10.	To what extent have the interventions of different actors been harmonized?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Degree to which the Project partners actively participate and promote coordination mechanisms with KAS and other development partners to avoid</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documents, reports and other materials</li> <li>• External sources</li> <li>• Monitoring data</li> </ul>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews</p>	Document review

		<p>overlaps, leverage contributions and catalyse joint work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence that the project promoted effective partnerships and strategic alliances around its main output areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Qualitative data from KIIs from <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sida</li> <li>EUOK</li> <li>KAS</li> <li>Statistics Sweden</li> <li>Contractor</li> <li>Senior Government stakeholders</li> <li>Development partners</li> <li>AGE</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		<p>Qualitative iterative data analysis of the KIIs with key stakeholders</p> <p>Triangulation between data sources, data collection techniques, and data types according to principles of iterative analysis</p>
<b>Additional questions</b>					
EQ 11.	Has the project contributed to poverty reduction? How?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence and examples of Project's contribution to poverty reduction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documents, reports and other materials</li> <li>External sources</li> <li>Monitoring data</li> <li>Qualitative data from KIIs from <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sida</li> <li>EUOK</li> <li>KAS</li> <li>Statistics Sweden</li> <li>Contractor</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews</p>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Qualitative iterative data analysis of the KIIs with key stakeholders</p> <p>Triangulation between data sources, data collection techniques, and data types according to principles of iterative analysis</p>
EQ 12.	Has the project been implemented in accordance with the rights perspective: i.e. Have target groups been participating in project planning, implementations and follow up? Has anyone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Degree to which the project was implemented in accordance with the rights perspective, i.e.</li> <li>Degree to which the project created and implemented mechanisms for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>participatory planning, implementation and follow up</li> <li>transparent and accountable information sharing on project implementation</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documents, reports and other materials</li> <li>External sources</li> <li>Monitoring data</li> <li>Qualitative data from KIIs from <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sida</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews</p>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Qualitative iterative data analysis of the KIIs with key stakeholders</p> <p>Triangulation between data sources, data collection techniques,</p>

	<p>been discriminated by the project through its implementation? Has the project been implemented in a transparent fashion? Are there accountability mechanisms in the project?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ prevention of discrimination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ EUOK</li> <li>○ KAS</li> <li>○ Statistics Sweden</li> <li>○ Contractor</li> </ul>		<p>and data types according to principles of iterative analysis</p>
EQ 13.	<p>Has the project been designed and implemented in a conflict-sensitive manner? Has the project had any positive or negative effects on gender equality? Could gender mainstreaming have been improved in planning, implementation or follow up?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Degree to which gender was mainstreamed in all phases of the project.</li> <li>• Conflict sensitivity considered in project design</li> <li>• Transfers of gender knowledge, both operationally and institutionally from FCG and Statistics Sweden to KAS</li> <li>• Perception if KAS is a gender equal institution</li> <li>• Evidence of positive and negative effects of the project of gender equality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative data from KIIs from               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sida</li> <li>○ EUOK</li> <li>○ KAS</li> <li>○ Statistics Sweden</li> <li>○ FCG</li> <li>○ AGE</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews</p> <p>Focus-Group discussions</p>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Qualitative iterative data analysis of the KIIs with key stakeholders</p> <p>Triangulation between data sources, data collection techniques, and data types according to principles of iterative analysis</p>

## Annex 2 – List of interviewed persons

Stakeholder	Position
<b>Kosovo Agency of Statistics (KAS)</b>	
Ilir Berisha	Acting Chief Executive Officer
Ibrahim Rustemi	Director, DPPCC
Avni Kastrati	Director, DSPS
Xhevrie Fetahu	Department of National Accounts (NoA)
Fatmir Morina	Director DNA & NOE
Edona Rexhepi	Non- Observed Economy
Ramiz Ulaj	Director, DMTI
Ismail Sahiti	Director, DES
Bahri Sejdini	KAS Ferizaj Office
Buram Limolli	Director of IT Department
<b>Project Team</b>	
Per Andreasson	Former Team Leader (TL), Statistics Sweden
Håkan Tegenrot	Team Leader (TL), Statistics Sweden
Visar Berisha	Interim Team Leader (FCG)
Besnik Limaj	Former Team Leader (FCG) and KE3
Therese Hedlund	Project Manager (Statistics Sweden)
Nathan Teitgen	Former Project Manager
<b>Representatives from donors' and project partners</b>	
Nasrin Pourghazian	Head of Development Cooperation – Embassy of Sweden in Prishtina
Nertila Gojani	Program Manager – Embassy of Sweden in Prishtina
Samir Selimi	Program Manager, Cooperation Section- EUOK
Stefan Andersson	Head of Section for International Development Cooperation, Statistics Sweden (Statistics of Sweden/ SCB)
Ana Maria Orviedo	Senior Economist World Bank
Teuta Halimi	UNICEF
Sabine Lange	Senior Project Manager, GOPA, IPA Multibeneficiary Project
<b>Representatives from other National Authorities</b>	
Bjondina Rexha	Ministry of Finance
Anila Abazi	Ministry of Finance, Chief of staff

Stakeholder	Position
Loresa Statovci	Ministry of Finance, Advisor
Ibish Kastrati	Central Bank of Kosovo
<u>Other Users of statistics</u>	
Nicole Farnsworth	Think Tank in Gender Kosovo Women's Network
Nertile Latifi	Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist at USAID
Art Shala	CEO XPR Consulting

## Annex 3 – List of documents

The following documents were available during the inception phase:

Description of the Action, Strengthening of the Statistical System of Kosovo, 2019-2022;

Inception Report of the Strengthening of the Statistical System of Kosovo, 2019-2022;

1<sup>st</sup> Annual Report, draft (1 May 2019 – 30 April 2020)

2<sup>nd</sup> Bi-annual Report, (1 May-31 October 2020)

Minutes of Meeting of the Steering Committee (1,2,3,4 and 5)

Minutes of Meeting of the Steering Committee (1,2,3,4 and 5)

# Annex 4 – Terms of Reference

## Terms of Reference for the Mid-Review of ‘Strengthening Statistical System in Kosovo 2019-2023’

Date: 05.10.2021

### 1. General information

#### 1.1 Introduction

Project ‘Strengthening Statistical System in Kosovo 2019 – 2023’ (“the Project”) consist of five components that is in line with, and provide a foundation for contributing to results within, the strategy for Sweden’s reform cooperation with Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and Turkey 2014-2020.

The program is implemented by Statistics of Sweden (SCB) two components and three components by a consulting company which was selected through open procurement, the awarded company was FCG. The main beneficiary of the programm is Kosovo Agency of Statistics. The project is co-financed by the European Union Office in Kosovo (EUOK)

The components of the Project are made based of the national priorities deriving from the national documents and strategies, which served for drafting of the Description of the Action (Annex I of the Agreement).

The Project consists five results:

Result 1: Further improvement of sectoral statistics.

Result 2: Further development of Social statistics indicators – preparations for a population register and for implementation of 2021 population census.

Result 3: Further improvement of metadata system, documentation and dissemination and modernisation of data collection methods (i.e. business statistics and population register).

Result 4: Strengthening planning and coordination of the national statistical system to improve the delivery of objectives and outputs in line with the 5-year programme for official statistics, and the communication and collaboration with key stakeholders.

Result 5: Building the overall capacity and resilience of KAS to maximize results and achieve sustainability by strengthening management and organisational development.

The project aims at increasing the capacities of KAS to carry out its core activities in a standardised and independent manner – in line with EU standards – as well as strengthen KAS’s management and coordination capacities.

The overall objective is to contribute to the strengthening of the statistical system of Kosovo by enabling the development of reliable statistical information and facilitating improved decision making. The assignments of midterm evaluation will provide the following input:

- The extent to which the project was relevant at time of conceptualization, and remains relevant and suited to the country. The review should evaluate the quality of the project design, including its objectives, results and lessons learned to date.

- A description and an assessment of the results achieved, compared to the expected results stated in the project document. This should include also indication of any alternative approach(es) that could have been adopted, if any.
- The extent to which the Program is making effective progress in attaining its specific objectives for all 5 components.
- Lessons learned to date and guidance on how to integrate such lessons into project implementation going forward.
- Assessment of risks and mitigation measures under the project.
- Recommendations for the ongoing implementation of the Project and its potential expansion.

## 1.2 Midterm evaluation rationale

This midterm evaluation is called for the following reasons:

- To provide Sida with a basis for determining the long-term value of its contribution.
- To provide assessment the progress of the current programme as input for improvement and adjustment in ongoing contribution
- To compile and summarize experiences made in the project, as input to designing future projects (next phase) and possible cooperations.

## 2. The assignment

### 2.1 Midterm evaluation purpose: Intended use and intended users

Midterm evaluation is to help Sida, EUOK and KAS to assess progress of the programme success and challenges. Based on lessons learned give guidance for adjustment and improvement of the current project and the next phase. The midterm evaluation will be used to inform the Sida and KAS on how project implementation may be adjusted and improved. The above stakeholders will use the midterm evaluation to improve the Document of Action (DoA).

The primary intended users of the evaluation are:

- the Swedish Embassy in Pristina and Department Europe and Latin America at Sida HQ;
- European Union Office in Kosovo (EUOK)
- Statistics of Sweden (SCB);
- Kosovo Agency for Statistics

The midterm evaluation is to be designed, conducted and reported to meet the needs of the intended users and tenderers shall elaborate in the inception phase how this will be ensured during the evaluation process. During the inception phase, the evaluator will agree on who will be responsible for keeping the various stakeholders informed about the evaluation.

### 2.2 Midterm evaluation scope

The midterm evaluation scope is the following but not limited to:

- Project design
- Project implementation
  - Management
  - Staffing
  - Planning

- Dependency management
- Project outcome
- Cooperation
  - between the project partners (EUoK, Sida, KAS, FCG, SCB)
  - within KAS
- Institutional capacity building
  - In KAS, especially the assessment of the vulnerabilities of KAS as an institution and recommendation on how the project can provide support to improve this.
  - In Departments that are supported by project
  - Recruitment of inters is it serving as value added to KAS

If needed, the scope of the evaluation may be further elaborated by the evaluator in the inception report.

## 2.3 Midterm evaluation objective: Criteria and questions

The objective/objectives of this evaluation is/are to evaluate the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability and coordination of the project and formulate recommendations on how to improve and possibly adjust its implementation.

The midterm evaluation questions are:

### **Relevance**

- To which extent has the project conformed to the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries and donor policies?

### **Efficiency**

- Can the costs for the project be justified by its results? Have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve outcomes?
- What have been achieved so far? What are the major constraints so far? How can be explained the delay in delivery?

### **Effectiveness**

- To which extent have the project contributed to intended outcomes? If so, why? If not, why not?
- To what extent has lessons learned from what works well and less well been used to improve and adjust Program implementation?

### **Impact**

- What is the overall impact of the Project in terms of direct or indirect, negative and positive results?

### **Sustainability**

- Is it likely that the benefits (outcomes) of the project are sustainable?
- Has the Agency to Agency cooperation between KAS and SCB served its purpose in institutional building capacity, in KAS, to sustainably administer the project results over time?
- Was the project's staffing strategy implemented as intended? Did it serve its purpose in building sustainable institutional capacity in the target organizations?
  - Appointment of Swedish Experts
  - Counterpartship and gradual retraction of Swedish hands-on support

- What are the prospects of KAS sustainably and independently maintaining the results of the project in the foreseeable future?
  - o Will the institutional capacities built with support of the project remain after closeout?
  - o Will the products developed by the project be maintained?
  - o Will KAS function as intended?
- Is it likely that KAS will hire the interns?
- How effectively has the project built necessary capacity of people and institutions? How effectively has the project built national ownership and capacity? How likely the project will achieve its objectives in the second half of the project and what elements need to be taken into account to ensure sustainability of outcomes?

#### Coherence

- To what extent is the intervention links to overall objectives of KAS?

#### Coordination

- To what extent have the interventions of different actors been harmonised?

In addition, the midterm evaluation shall assess Sida's perspective:

Has the project contributed to poverty reduction? How?

Has the project been implemented in accordance with the rights perspective: i.e. Have target groups been participating in project planning, implementations and follow up? Has anyone been discriminated by the project through its implementation? Has the project been implemented in a transparent fashion? Are there accountability mechanisms in the project?

Has the project been designed and implemented in a conflict sensitive manner?

Has the project had any positive or negative effects on gender equality? Could gender mainstreaming have been improved in planning, implementation or follow up?

## 2.4 Midterm evaluation approach and methods

It is expected that the evaluator describes and justifies an appropriate evaluation approach/methodology and methods for data collection in the tender. The evaluation design, methodology and methods for data collection and analysis are expected to be fully developed and presented in the inception report.

Limitations to the chosen approach/methodology and methods shall be made explicit by the evaluator and the consequences of these limitations discussed in the tender. The evaluator shall to the extent possible, present mitigation measures to address them. A clear distinction is to be made between evaluation approach/methodology and methods.

A *gender responsive* approach/methodology, methods, tools and data analysis techniques should be used.

Sida's approach to evaluation is *utilization-focused*, which means the evaluator should facilitate the *entire evaluation process* with careful consideration of how everything that is done will affect the use of the evaluation. It is therefore expected that the evaluators, in their tender, present i) how intended users are to participate in and contribute to the evaluation process and ii) methodology and methods for data collection that create space for reflection, discussion and learning between the intended users of the evaluation.

In cases where sensitive or confidential issues are to be addressed in the evaluation, evaluators should ensure an evaluation design that do not put informants and stakeholders at risk during the data collection phase or the dissemination phase.

## 2.5 Organisation of midterm evaluation management

This midterm evaluation is commissioned by Embassy of Sweden in Pristina. The intended users are: the Embassy of Sweden in Pristina, European Union Office Kosovo, EUROLATIN and EU Delegated unit at Sida, Kosovo Agency for Statistics. The intended users of the evaluation form a steering group, which has contributed to and agreed on the ToR for this evaluation. The steering group is a decision-making body. It will approve the inception report and the final report of the evaluation. The steering group will participate in the start-up meeting of the evaluation, as well as in the debriefing/validation workshop where preliminary findings and conclusions are discussed.

## 2.6 Midterm evaluation quality

All Sida's evaluations shall conform to OECD/DAC's Quality Standards for Development Evaluation<sup>1</sup>. The evaluators shall use the Sida OECD/DAC Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation<sup>2</sup>. The evaluators shall specify how quality assurance will be handled by them during the evaluation process.

OECD/DAC Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation<sup>3</sup>. The evaluators shall specify how quality assurance will be handled by them during the evaluation process.

## 2.7 Time schedule and deliverables

It is expected that a time and work plan is presented in the tender and further detailed in the inception report. The evaluation shall be carried out **1 November 2021 – 07 February 2021**. The timing of any field visits, surveys and interviews need to be settled by the evaluator in dialogue with the main stakeholders during the inception phase.

The table below lists key deliverables for the evaluation process. Alternative deadlines for deliverables may be suggested by the consultant and negotiated during the inception phase.

Deliverables	Participants	Deadlines
1. Start-up meeting/s Embassy of Sweden in Pristina or virtually (as conditions permit)	Evaluator, responsible Program Officer and Embassy's development cooperation staff.	1 November 2021
2. Presentation of draft Inception Report at Embassy of Sweden in Pristina	Evaluator, responsible Program Officer and Embassy's development cooperation staff.	5 November 2021
3. Comments from intended users to evaluators (alternatively these may be sent to evaluators ahead of the inception meeting)		5 - 19 November 2021 commenting

<sup>1</sup> DAC Quality Standards for Development Evaluation, OECD, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management, Sida in cooperation with OECD/DAC, 2014.

<sup>3</sup> Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management, Sida in cooperation with OECD/DAC, 2014.

4. Submission/ Presentation of draft evaluation report		28 December 2021
5. Comments from intended users to evaluators	Responsible Program Officer and Embassy's development cooperation staff, EUoK, Agency for Statistics Kosovo, SCB.	28 December – 11 January 2021 comenting
6. Final evaluation report	Responsible Program Officer and Embassy's development cooperation staff, EUoK, Agency for Statistics Kosovo, SCB.	28 January 2021
7. (Tentative) Seminar; Embassy of Sweden in Prisitna or virtually (as conditions permit)	Responsible Program Officer and Embassy's development cooperation staff, EUoK, Agency for Statistics Kosovo, SCB and Consulting company FCG.	7 February 2021

**The inception report** will form the basis for the continued evaluation process and shall be approved by Embassy of Sweden inPristina before the evaluation proceeds to implementation. The inception report should be written in English and cover evaluability issues and interpretations of evaluation questions, present the evaluation approach/methodology (including how a utilization-focused and gender responsive approach will be ensured), methods for data collection and analysis as well as the full evaluation design. A clear distinction between the evaluation approach/methodology and methods for data collection shall be made. All limitations to the methodology and methods shall be made explicit and the consequences of these limitations discussed. A specific time and work plan, including number of hours/working days for each team member, for the remainder of the evaluation should be presented. The time plan shall allow space for reflection and learning between the intended users of the evaluation.

**The final report** shall be written in English and be professionally proof read. The final report should have clear structure and follow the report format in the Sida Decentralised Evaluation Report Template for decentralised evaluations (see Annex C). The executive summary should be maximum 3 pages. The evaluation approach/methodology and methods for data collection used shall be clearly described and explained in detail and a clear distinction between the two shall be made. All limitations to the methodology and methods shall be made explicit and the consequences of these limitations discussed. Findings shall flow logically from the data, showing a clear line of evidence to support the conclusions. Conclusions should be substantiated by findings and analysis. Evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations should reflect a gender analysis/an analysis of identified and relevant cross-cutting issues. Recommendations and lessons learned should flow logically from conclusions. Recommendations should be specific, directed to relevant stakeholders and categorised as a short-term, medium-term and long-term and adjusted to Document of Action (DoA)The report should be no more than 35 pages excluding annexes (including Terms of Reference and Inception Report). The evaluator shall adhere to the Sida OECD/DAC Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management, Sida in cooperation with OECD/DAC, 2014

The evaluator shall, upon approval of the final report, insert the report into the Sida Decentralised Evaluation Report for decentralised evaluations and submit it to Nordic Morning (in pdf-format) for publication and release in the Sida publication data base. The order is placed by sending the approved report to [sida@nordicmorning.com](mailto:sida@nordicmorning.com), always with a copy to the responsible Sida Programme Officer as well as Sida's Evaluation Unit ([evaluation@sida.se](mailto:evaluation@sida.se)). Write "Sida decentralised evaluations" in the email subject field. The following information must always be included in the order to Nordic Morning:

1. The name of the consulting company.
2. The full evaluation title.
3. The invoice reference "ZZ980601".
4. Type of allocation "sakanslag".
5. Type of order "digital publicering/publikationsdatabas.

## 2.8 Midterm evaluation team qualification

The evaluation team should combine the following competencies:

- Consultant with 7 years of documented experience of carrying out evaluations in the public sector
- Consultant with 5 years of documented experience of development of national statistical institutions (NSI's), preferably with experience from Eastern Europe/Western Balkans and EU approximation process,
- Consultant with documented statistical experience from the Western Balkans.
- One of the above consultants shall also have 5-7 years of documented knowledge about Swedish government agencies and their role in the Swedish international development cooperation (its structure and content).
- All should be professionally fluent in the English language, have an adequate academic background
- The local consultant should be fluent in Albanian.
- Good experience and knowledge in the area of gender equality mainstreaming.

A CV for each team member shall be included in the call-off response. It should contain a full description of relevant qualifications and professional work experience.

It is important that the competencies of the individual team members are complimentary. It is highly recommended that local consultants are included in the team if appropriate.

The evaluators must be independent from the evaluation object and evaluated activities, and have no stake in the outcome of the evaluation.

## 2.9 Financial and human resources

The maximum budget amount available for the evaluation is SEK 610,000.00.

The contact person at Swedish Embassy is Nertila Gojani - Program Officer, (e-mail: [nertila.gojani@gov.se](mailto:nertila.gojani@gov.se) ). The contact person should be consulted if any problems arise during the evaluation process.

Relevant Sida documentation will be provided by Embassy of Sweden in Pristina and KAS.

Contact details to intended users (cooperation partners, Swedish Embassies, other donors etc.) will be provided by Embassy of Sweden in Pristina, EUOK and KAS.

The evaluator will be required to arrange the logistics (booking interviews, preparing visits, etc.) including any necessary security arrangements. The evaluators should conduct the field visits, on the spot and interviews, not only digitally.

### 3. Annexes

#### Annex A: List of key documentation

- Document of Action
- Action Document
- Inception Report ‘Strengthening Statistical System in Kosovo 2010-2023’
- Annual reports
- Other documents produced by the Project available at Kosovo Agency for Statistics

#### Annex B: Data sheet on the evaluation object

Information on the evaluation object (i.e. project or programme)	
Title of the evaluation object	Strengthening Statistical System in Kosovo 2019- 2023
ID no. in PLANIt	10841
Dox no./Archive case no.	UM 2018/44609/PRIS
Activity period (if applicable)	2019-2023
Agreed budget (if applicable)	3,530,000 EURO
Main sector <sup>5</sup>	Good governance, statistics
Name and type of implementing organisation <sup>6</sup>	Public institution, consultancy firms
Aid type <sup>7</sup>	Project type
Swedish strategy	Result Area 1

Information on the evaluation assignment	
Commissioning unit/Swedish Embassy	Embassy of Sweden Pristina
Contact person at unit/Swedish Embassy	Nertila Gojani
Timing of evaluation (mid-term, end-of-programme, ex-post or other)	Mid.term review
ID no. in PLANIt (if other than above).	n/a

#### Annex C: Decentralised midterm evaluation report template

OECD DAC Criteria

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When evaluating projects and projects it is useful to consider the following criteria. The criteria were first laid out in the DAC Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance and later defined in the Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management. The following further explains the criteria and provides some sample questions to illustrate how they may be used in practice:

### **Relevance**

The extent to which the aid activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient and donor.

In evaluating the relevance of a project or a project, it is useful to consider the following questions:

- To what extent are the objectives of the project still valid?
- Are the activities and outputs of the project consistent with the overall goal and the attainment of its objectives?
- Are the activities and outputs of the project consistent with the intended impacts and effects?

### **Effectiveness**

A measure of the extent to which an aid activity attains its objectives.

In evaluating the effectiveness of a project or a project, it is useful to consider the following questions:

- To what extent were the objectives achieved / are likely to be achieved?
- What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?

### **Efficiency**

Efficiency measures the outputs -- qualitative and quantitative -- in relation to the inputs. It is an economic term which signifies that the aid uses the least costly resources possible in order to achieve the desired results. This generally requires comparing alternative approaches to achieving the same outputs, to see whether the most efficient process has been adopted.

When evaluating the efficiency of a project or a project, it is useful to consider the following questions:

- Were activities cost-efficient?
- Were objectives achieved on time?
- Was the project or project implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternatives?

### **Impact**

The positive and negative changes produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. This involves the main impacts and effects resulting from the activity on the local social, economic, environmental and other development indicators. The examination should be concerned with both intended and unintended results and must also include the positive and negative impact of external factors, such as changes in terms of trade and financial conditions.

When evaluating the impact of a project or a project, it is useful to consider the following questions:

- What has happened as a result of the project or project?
- What real difference has the activity made to the beneficiaries?
- How many people have been affected?

### **Sustainability**

Sustainability is concerned with measuring whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn. Projects need to be environmentally as well as financially sustainable.

When evaluating the sustainability of a project or a project, it is useful to consider the following questions:

- To what extent did the benefits of a project or project continue after donor funding ceased?
- What were the major factors which influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the project or project?

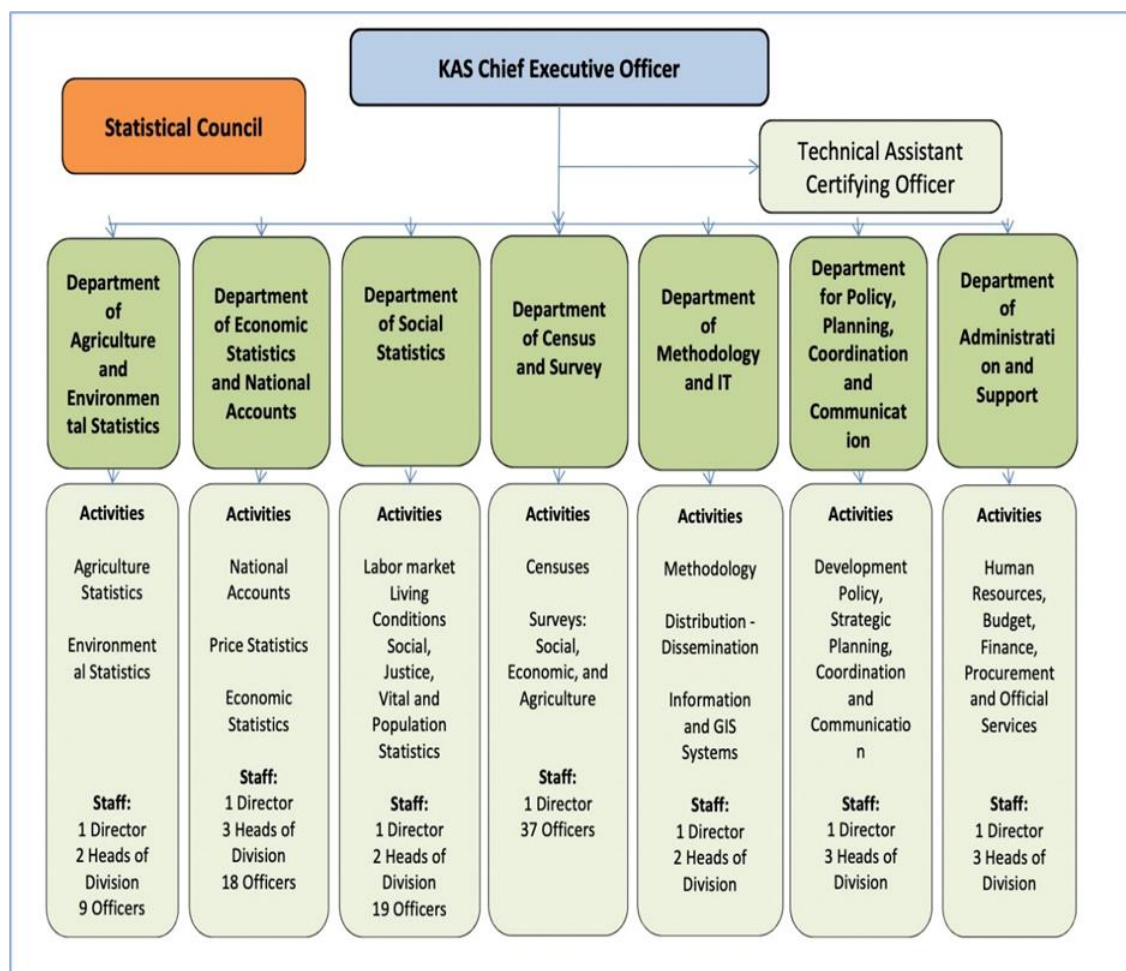
**Coherence**

- To what extent is this intervention coherent with other interventions which have similar objectives?
- To what extent is the intervention coherent internally?
- To what extent is the intervention coherent with international obligations?

**Annex D : Project/Programme document**

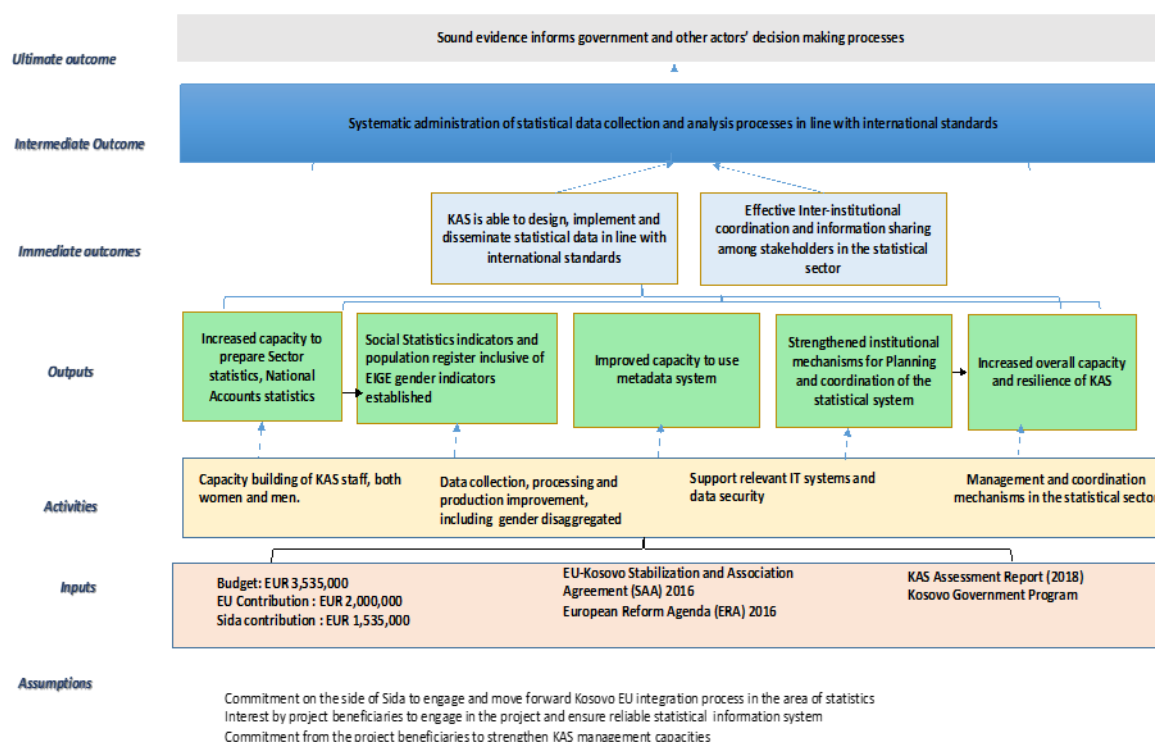
# Annex 5 – KAS Organigram

FIGURE 1. KAS ORGANIGRAM



# Annex 6 – Project Intervention Logic

**FIGURE 1. RECONSTRUCTED INTERVENTION LOGIC**



Source: <https://ask.rks-gov.net/media/3430/re-organization-of-kas.pdf>



## Mid term review of the Project ‘Strengthening Statistical System in Kosovo 2019–2023’

Sida commissioned this mid-term as an opportunity to benefit from an independent assessment of activities implemented within the project and its performance. The review will assist Sida, European Union Office in Kosovo (EUOK), and implementing partners to inform adjustments and improvement of the current project and the next phase, and in particular the improvement of the Document of Action (DoA). The review was designed following Sida's but also internationally accepted evaluation guidance and standards, focusing on OECD DAC criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability, and coherence of the project. The evaluation team also integrated aspects of assessment of crosscutting dimensions and perspectives such as poverty reduction, gender equality and rights, and conflict sensitivity. The immediate users of the review findings and recommendations include Sida, EUOK, and Kosovo's Agency of Statistics (KAS). Other intended users are other relevant staff at Headquarters (HQ) within Sida and EU who may benefit from the evaluation findings. The mid-term review was focused on the support provided by Sida to the Kosovo Agency of Statistics through the project Strengthening Statistical System in Kosovo 2019–2023. There are two main actors involved: Statistics of Sweden (SoS) for transfer of information between two statistical agencies and SoS is involved in two areas of the project. Also, a consultant company, FCG Sweden manages the other three areas of the project. The project aims to increase the capacities of KAS to carry out its core activities in a standardised and independent manner; including gender equality – in line with EU standards – as well as strengthen KAS's management and coordination capacities. The project is financed by the EU and the Kingdom of Sweden for a total of 3,530,000 Euros and is implemented, through indirect management, with the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) (44%). The project is co-financed by the European Union Office in Kosovo (EUOK) (56%). Sida is a long-standing partner of KAS and has provided funding to Kosovo statistical sector since 2001. The recommendations focus on seeking a stronger focus on the delivery of results considering underlying factors that facilitate/hinder the achievement of results.

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