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Sida Decentralised Evaluation

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Evaluation of the Regional Statistics Cooperation on the Western Balkans 2013 – 2016

Final Report

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Evaluation of the Regional Statistics Cooperation on the Western Balkans 2013 – 2016

**Final Report
December 2016**

**Leif Danielsson
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Abbreviations and Acronyms

BHAS	Bosnia and Herzegovina Agency for Statistics
BPO	Balkan Project Office
BTS	Business tendency and consumer survey
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
EEA	Environmental expenditure and accounts
ES	Environmental Statistics
Eurostat	European Union Statistical Office
GE	Gender Equality
GEI	Gender Equality Index
GPG	Gender Pay Gap
ICO	International Co-operations Office (at SCB)
IPA	The Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (Eurostat)
IPA MB	IPA Multi-Beneficiary (Eurostat regional assistance)
INSTAT	Institute of Statistics Albania
KAS	Kosovo Agency of Statistics
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MFA	Material flow accounts
MONSTAT	Montenegro Statistical Office
MSEK	Million Swedish Krona
NACE	European Classification of Economic Activities. (Nomenclature statistique des activités économiques dans la Communauté européenne).
NSIs	National Statistical Institutions
PD	Project Document
PIS	Partnership in Statistics
PP	Project Plan
RBM	Results-based management
RBMF	Results-based monitoring framework
RMF	Results Monitoring Framework
SBR	Statistical Business Register
SCB	Statistics Sweden
SEPA	Serbian Environmental Protection Agency
SES	Structure of Earning Survey
Sida	Swedish International Development Agency
SORS	Statistical Office of Republic of Serbia
SOSM	Statistical Office of Serbia and Montenegro
SSO	The State Statistical Office in the Republic of Macedonia
TOR	Terms of Reference
TUS	Time-Use survey

Executive summary

This report presents the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation of the Regional Statistics Cooperation on the Western Balkans 2013-2016 conducted during the period September – November 2016. The regional project is currently in its fourth project-period 2013-2016; the previous project phases covered the period of 2002-2012. The budget of the current project is 27.6 MSEK. A 6-month extension until June 2017 has been granted awaiting the outcome of this evaluation.

The partner to Statistics Sweden (SCB) in the regional project is a Regional Statistics Committee (RSC) consisting of one representative from each of the six participating countries and SCB's Balkan Project Office (BPO). The participating countries are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia. The evaluation approach was structured around the OECD/DAC criteria by focussing on relevance, effectiveness, impact, sustainability and organizational learning. The evaluation draws on evidence from a review of relevant project documents, interviews and data collected during a field mission during October 16 – 28, 2016 including key informant interviews, stakeholder consultation, beneficiary interviews and focus groups discussions. The data has been validated through different sources of information received.

The overall objective of the fourth phase is ‘developed statistical systems in the region supported by sound statistical methods and practices in line with EU standards’. The National Statistical Institutions (NSIs) in the region are at different levels of development and hence the regional cooperation programme is a platform which offers an opportunity for less developed NSIs to learn from their more developed counterparts from the region.

To deliver towards this objective, in the fourth phase, the regional programme has included five different project components; Environmental Statistics, Survey Methodology, Gender statistics, the Summer School, and the Regional Statistics Committee. Within the first three components there is evidence of planning of support as workshops/seminars and a perceived strength of the programme has been its flexibility and willingness to respond to ad hoc needs of the NSIs. The Summer School has developed into a forum to provide young statisticians a platform to both present papers and learn from others in the region. The last component focuses on strengthening of the RSC in itself.

During the current phase there has been 33 activities implemented with at least 618 participants, 402 women and 216 men. The ad hoc seminars seem to be the most popular activity with 146 participants while the survey methodology has had 47

participants. The most frequent institution is INSTAT who has sent almost one hundred participants and SSO has sent the least only 22 participants. The activities within the regional programme, mostly seminars, workshops, training and also occasional study tours have aimed to provide a transfer of know-how and building of competence at the individual level. The programme has on the outcome level sought to develop the capacity of the NSIs but has not systematically considered the linkage between developing the capacity of individuals and that of the institution within which they work.

The ToR called for the evaluation to compare actual against planned results at both output and outcome levels. This proved difficult given poor definition of both outputs and outcomes within the programme's results framework and the reality that systematic planning and monitoring and evaluation of intended outputs were weak. Bearing these limitations in mind, the evaluators found that:

- The activities carried out were by and large **relevant**. They aligned with meeting the priorities set out in Sida's strategy for the region and were reported by interviews as relevant to the needs of the individuals supported and the goals of the involved NSIs. On the other hand, the priority given to development of environmental and gender related statistics appear more driven by Sida's priorities, rather than those of the NSIs.
-
- **Effectiveness** assesses the extent which a development intervention has achieved its objectives. Each of the components had a number of objectives which we examined. Our overall judgement is that the support has been moderately effective.
-
- **Impact** is the total of the effects of an intervention. In general, we can say the effects of the interventions have been positive, especially considering the Summer School, statistical methodology, gender and social statistics.
-
- The prospects for **sustainability** of results are good for the majority of the components due to a high degree of relevance with national and EU accession priorities. Overall, sustainability of project results will depend on the ability of NSIs to retain staff. The project has focused primarily on individual competence development and there is no theory of change how this will improve the institutional capacity. The sustainability of the RSC is questionable in the medium term in the absence of external support. The RSC ownership of the activities of the regional program has improved, but their engagement in management remains limited and there has been little consideration of what would be needed for the RSC to continue post-programme support or even whether this is needed and to serve what purpose.

The evaluation briefly examined the effectiveness of the project monitoring and management. The project management responsibility rests with the BPO. During the

evaluation, basic monitoring information was requested on timelines, plans for implementation versus actual implementation of activities, budgeted versus actually spending, and progress against indicators in the results framework. This information was not readily available, albeit BPO staff was able to put together information over time. This indicates a programme that has room for improvements in using standard project planning, monitoring and evaluation approaches expected in development cooperation projects.

The regional cooperation project is soon ending its fourth phase and has been running for the last 14 years, which is a long time. There will be discussions if there will be a new phase, how it should be designed, and how it should be managed. It's recommended that future interventions should be focused on enhancing sustainability, in line with Sida's result strategies in the region. Therefore, the evaluation recommends:

1. Sida funds another phase of the Regional Statistics Cooperation.
2. A Balkan Regional Office is maintained to coordinate and to facilitate the implementation of an exit strategy. The objectives, the institutional set-up as well as its geographical location need to be discussed with the stakeholders. The evaluators consider that closing the BPO prematurely will have an initial negative effect on enabling the RSC to manage the next phase. The transition of coordination and implementation of activities will likely have to take place gradually.
3. An exit strategy should be a major component in the design of the final phase. This exit strategy needs to be discussed among all the stakeholders in the programme; Sida, RSC, and the top management of the NSIs. Sida need to make a decision whether to entrust this to SCB or tender the assignment.
4. A capacity development plan of the RSC should be designed as part of the Project Plan to be implemented and should include strategic and operational issues and documents designed to govern the management of the regional cooperation in the long as well as short term.
5. A more precise identification of priorities and areas of intervention, which would ensure better delivery as well as availability of statistics in targeted areas. Implementing planning seminars similar to the PGSC at Eurostat might address this need.
6. In addition to workshops and study tours, methods such as training lectures, training on the job, coaching and mentoring on specific technical issues would also ensure greater effectiveness and should be considered.

7. A more precise monitoring framework, with detailed list of activities, progress and target indicators, milestones, to ensure better project management. There is also a need to link the implemented activities with planned to measure the progress and elaborate on a theory of change to conceptualize how to achieve the outcomes.
8. The systematic tracking of activities with accurate annual planning and monitoring should be prioritised during implementation. Continuous aggregation of data and a database of statistics will enable trend analysis, comparative analysis and system level impact over time.
9. A more accurate budgeting by activity and type of intervention, which would ensure better project effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. Cost monitoring should be developed to monitor the project continuously at least on the component level to ensure timely decision-making and monitoring of staying on track.

1 Introduction

1.1 BACKGROUND

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) has commissioned SIPU International AB to carry out an evaluation of two Sida-funded projects: the Regional Statistics Cooperation on the Western Balkans 2013-2016 and the Partnership in Statistics, a cooperation project between Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (SORS) and Statistics Sweden (SCB). This report presents the major observations and findings for the evaluation of Regional Statistics Cooperation on the Western Balkans 2013 – 2016. The results of the evaluation of the bi-lateral project are presented in a separate report.¹

The regional project is currently in its fourth project-period 2013-2016; the previous project phases covered the period of 2002-2012. The budget of the current project is 27.6 MSEK. A 6-month extension until June 2017 has been granted awaiting the outcome of this evaluation. The partner to SCB in the regional project is a Regional Statistics Committee (RSC) consisting of one representative from each of the six participating countries and SCB's Balkan Project Office (BPO). The participating countries are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia.

The cooperation with Serbia and the Western Balkans as a region is governed by the Results strategy for Sweden's Reform cooperation with Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and Turkey 2014-2020. However, both the above projects were initiated before this strategy came into effect. One significant impact of the result strategy was that Montenegro and Macedonia could enter the regional cooperation as full members (before 2014 they could only participate at their own cost)². The cooperation with Serbia was governed by Sida Strategy for development cooperation with Serbia January 2009 – December 2012.

¹ Evaluation of the Sida-funded Partnership in Statistics: A cooperation project between Statistical Office of Republic of Serbia (SORS) and Statistics Sweden (SCB)

² The Management of SSO Macedonia decided to continue with participation in the regional project on July, 2014.

The field visit by the Team of Evaluators took place between the 16th and the 28th of October, 2016. This Report is thus based on the results and findings of that field visit, together with the review of all the project documents and reports.

The Report presents an overall review of the progress of the various project components realized by SCB with the RSC during this project period. Information in this report was obtained from interviews with Sida representatives both in Stockholm and Belgrade, SCB project managers, officials and employees at the participating statistical offices in the six participating countries, and also discussions with Eurostat officials in Luxembourg.

1.2 THE REGIONAL COOPERATION PROJECT

SCB has been an active implementing agency in the Balkans since 1998, together with Sida and Eurostat. Regional co-operation between Sida, Statistics Sweden (SCB), the National Statistical Offices in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia is a result of a dialogue that was initiated in 2001. At that time needs were identified in the statistics area that are vital for the development of the countries in South Eastern Europe, because both these countries' Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS) and the Stabilization and Association (SA) processes needed reliable locally produced data.

The Sida initiative resulted in the signing of the first framework agreement for co-operation with countries in the Balkans, a Regional Cooperation Project (RCP), in November 2002. The intent was to place the implementing partner close to the beneficiaries and to find an effective organisational structure for the programme. Hence, co-operation was to be based on a regional strategy drafted by SCB and it was agreed that SCB should recruit a regional coordinator. SCB opened a regional office in Belgrade in 2003 in order to facilitate the handling of the regional project as well as the bilateral projects in the region. Presently, Sida supports bilateral projects with SCB as institutional partner in Albania, Kosovo and Serbia. The first phase of the project covered the period of 2002 – 2004 and was evaluated by an external independent consultant in 2004 who recommended that the cooperation should be continued.

In 2004 a so-called authority agreement was signed between Sida and SCB for another project for 2005-2008 and a revised strategy based on the new Swedish policies and objectives for development cooperation developed. Under the regional agreement (framework agreement) it was decided that SCB should focus on environmental statistics, gender statistics and statistical methodology as areas of regional cooperation. Gender and environment were objectives in the old Swedish development policy but became main themes in the new policy, as did reduction of poverty. These three themes are still the core of the present Regional Cooperation Project.

The third Regional Cooperation Project covered the period February 2008 – December 2012, which included a 23 months extension. The fourth, and current, Regional Cooperation Project came into force for the period December 2012 – November 2016 but was given a no-cost extension until June 2017. The present fourth phase of the regional project has a total budget of SEK 27.6 million SEK.

The overall objective of the fourth phase is ‘developed statistical systems in the region supported by sound statistical methods and practices in line with EU standards’. The National Statistical Institutions (NSIs) in the region are at different levels of development. The regional cooperation programme is therefore a platform which offers an opportunity for less developed NSIs to learn from their more developed counterparts from the region. Sometimes assistance provided by an NSI from the region is more effective and practical than assistance provided by external experts.

Most of the NSIs in the region have many problems in common. One of them is poor theoretical knowledge in survey methodology as university courses in statistics are virtually non-existent. Such training, mainly of a theoretical nature, is provided by the regional programme. Some NSIs also need tailored assistance with design and analysis of specific surveys, whereas for others the priority is to address management issues. Those specific development issues are dealt with by programmes.

The only other regional development cooperation programme in statistics is the Eurostat EU/IPA-funded programme. Regarding bilateral programmes, the EU is by far the biggest donor, with Eurostat implementing substantial programmes in all the six Western Balkans countries involved in the Sida-funded regional programme. Other development partners include the IMF, UNICEF and World Bank.

The IPA multi-beneficiary statistical (regional) programme 2014 started in November 2015 and is planned to finish in September 2017, followed by another programme IPA 2015 MBP. Previous to these programmes several IPA MBP were implemented. The objective of the programme is to prepare the statistical authorities in the beneficiary countries for EU membership by aligning their methodologies and practices with the *acquis* in different statistical areas and integrating them into the European Statistical System. It aims at improving the availability and quality of statistics on foreign trade, migration statistics, agriculture statistics, national accounts, consumer price indices and purchasing power parities as well as business and energy statistics. Hence, the two regional projects are complementary.

1.3 RESULTS ACHIEVED DURING PREVIOUS PHASES³

The Sida-funded regional programme has produced a number of results:

- Basic competence developed to produce environmental statistics (ES) to be used in compliance with national needs and international requirements (especially in the area of waste statistics as most of the countries/offices have already performed surveys on waste);
- Initiation of coordination in the ES systems that include a variety of stakeholders (environmental protection agencies, ministries, meteorological offices, etc.) with sometimes overlapping responsibilities;
- Increased awareness of importance of ES in the countries in the region reflected through creation of ES units in almost all NSIs in the region;
- Introduction of new aspects of the environmental statistics to the NSIs in the region as well as sharing the experiences among the countries in waste statistics;
- Calculation of emissions of green house gases from agriculture and stationary combustion within the energy sector as recommended by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC);
- Preservation of a sustainable knowledge base in survey methodology by training over one hundred young statisticians from the region;
- Transfer of knowledge and good practices (such as scanning for statistical purposes, or organisation of census enumerators) among the offices in the region;
- Improvements (dealing with non-response, treatment of outliers etc.) to various surveys conducted by the statistical institutes in the region (Household Budget Surveys, Labour Force Surveys, Structural Business Statistics, etc.) in their efforts to meet the EU standards;
- Regular publication of methodological documents and methodological explanations for the survey results;

³ Regional Cooperation Project in South Eastern Europe, Project plan for the period 2013-2016, Statistics Sweden (SCB), 26 November 2012

- An increase of contacts between statisticians in the Western Balkans working in the same area of statistics as contribution to the reconciliation process;
- Improving writing skills and training young statisticians to speak in public and to engage in debate through participation at the Summer School;
- Theoretical knowledge and capacity to conduct time use survey independently developed;
- NSIs started publishing Women and Men booklets on a regular basis;
- New important indicators added to each new Women and Men booklets, and its layout and design improved;
- Methodology designed and questionnaire for measuring gender-based violence (G-BV) drafted;
- Theoretical knowledge and capacity in calculation of national gender pay gap (GPG) built;
- Development of communication plans in the NSIs in the region.

The Sida-funded regional cooperation project and other assistance programmes have therefore contributed to the good progress by the NSIs observed in the region in reaching the EU standards in statistics. Croatia signed the treaty of accession to EU in December 2011 and joined the European Union as its 28th member state on 1 July 2013. Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia are recognised candidates for future membership of the European Union. Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo are recognised as potential candidates for membership by the EU. However, the EU has no plans to expand within in the next four years.

1.4 PROJECT ORGANISATION

The project organisation of the Regional Cooperation Project consists of the International Cooperation Office (ICO) at SCB in Stockholm, a SCB project office in Belgrade, and the Regional Cooperation Committee.

The SCB Balkan Project Office (BPO) was opened in Belgrade in October 2003. The Office consisted of two staff members, an SCB Team Leader (TL) and a locally contracted project coordinator. Currently, the office has three staff members, the SCB Team Leader, a Bilateral Project Coordinator, and a Project Administrator.

The partner to SCB in the regional cooperation project is a non-formal Regional Statistics Committee (RSC)⁴, where each participating national statistics institute has one seat and SCB also holds one seat. The RSC was formed in 2008 in order to create a forum where the contents of the regional project could be discussed and to increase ownership and responsibility for the programmes. Chairmanship of the committee rotates between the representatives from the six participating countries.

The long-term intention is to transfer more of the management and implementation responsibilities to the RSC as part of an exit strategy. Therefore, in the current project more of the planning activities such as developing the annual plan have been included in the RSC's agenda. The RSC is one of the five components in the programme and will thus be discussed later in the report. However, at this point it suffice to say that the impression of the evaluation team is the progress towards fostering a more independent RSC that functions like a steering committee and takes greater leadership is moving very slowly.⁵

1.5 THE RATIONALE FOR THE REGIONAL PROJECT PHASE 4

Statistics play a central role when it comes to decision-making and monitoring. To decide how to efficiently allocate the resources of a country it is therefore important to monitor the undergoing social and economic conditions. Relevant and reliable statistical information that meets domestic needs, that supports the monitoring of the Country Development Strategy, and the EU Integration process is an important tool for sustainable development. Sustainable development and improved conditions for EU integration are also key issues in Sweden's country strategy towards the Balkans region.

The statistical offices in the Western Balkans countries are not yet able to provide policy makers, the business community and other customers with all the necessary

⁴ The RSC is described as a non-formal committee in the ToR for the evaluation and while lacking a legal status it may be considered so. However, in the following discussions this is not considered to be a hindrance to increase its mandate.

⁵ This is being discussed in the findings section of this report.

high quality and harmonised statistics, comparable to those produced in the EU Member States, although an increasing number of data becomes available. As a result, there is a lack of confidence in official statistics.⁶ Progress towards an efficient and modern statistical system has advanced at different speeds in each beneficiary and they are not at the same state of development.

Many of the needed statistics are either still produced following country specific national methodologies, concepts and standards which are not sufficiently harmonised with the EU and other international requirements or not produced at all. Even though the need for further harmonisation is recognised, the lack of human and financial resources often prohibits the implementation of the required changes.

The rationale for the current phase is explained in the Project Plan (PP)⁷, which for this evaluation is considered the Project Document. The PP was formulated as a result of discussions carried out with partners and stakeholders and finalised during a seminar on results-based management (RBM) held in December 2011. The project components and objectives were discussed and agreed upon with the partners during discussions during the RSC meetings and in a workshop being held in January 2012. The outcome was to continue to build upon the main themes in the previous project components. An inception period, January – March 2013, was stipulated in the agreement in order to develop a Results and Monitoring Framework (RMF) which was later submitted in an inception report and form the basis for the follow-up.⁸

The new project phase aimed at continuing assisting statistical development of the regional NSI's in capacity building in:

- Harmonizing methodologies and practises in the region in compliance with EU, standards;
- Sharing best practises and learning;
- Build professional networks;
- Train staff in EU standards;
- Improve cooperation, communication and coordination in the region; and
- Utilize and allocate statistics expertise in a cost effective way.

⁶ IPA 2014 Multi-beneficiary statistical cooperation programme

⁷ Regional Cooperation Project in South Eastern Europe, Project plan for the period 2013 – 2016. 26 November 2012.

⁸ Regional Cooperation Project in South Eastern Europe, 2013-2016, Inception report, 12 September 2013

The regional project also aimed to be complementary to the national projects. At the time of developing the project plan Sida was financing national bi-lateral projects in Albania, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia. Projects with Montenegro and Macedonia had been phased out before 2012 and Bosnia and Herzegovina was phased out in 2014.

Staff members of the NSIs look very favourable on opportunities to participate in activities with their colleagues from the other countries. They see many benefits of this, such as the creation of networks, opportunities for sharing of experiences, and learning from each other. Therefore, another important focus in the design of the regional project was providing opportunities for statisticians from the region to meet and share experiences and thus improve the cooperation, communication and coordination between experts in the region. While the project plan was designed with the objective of enhancing competencies and building capacity at the individual level, the linkage (theory of change) with strengthening institutional capacity was not well developed.

The project plan included a number of pre-defined activities, but the flexibility of the programme to re-direct its activities and to include *ad hoc* activities during the course of the project is particularly appreciated by the participating NSI's.

1.6 PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND COMPONENTS

The overall objective of the regional project is “*developed statistical systems in the region supported by sound statistical methods and practices in line with EU standards*”. This relates to the EU objective to prepare the statistics authorities in the region for future membership. The regional project complements the Sida bi-lateral national projects (and the other way around). One very important aspect of regional cooperation is to share best practises and learning between the various NSIs.⁹

The regional cooperation started in 2002. The current phase which started in 2013 has a budget of 27.6 MSEK and by the end of September 2016 20.9 MSEK (75%) had been utilized leaving 6.7 MSEK unused for the remaining 9 months (including the no-cost extension).

The regional cooperation programme is structured along five components mainly aimed for competence and capacity development. The five components are:

⁹ Regional Cooperation Project in South Eastern Europe, Statistics Sweden; Project plan for the period 2013-2016

- The Regional Statistics Committee
- Environmental statistics
- Survey methodology
- The Statistical Summer school
- Gender statistics.¹⁰

We note that it appears that Sida initially promoted the selection of gender and environment statistics as components of the regional statistical development cooperation. This probably reflects the fact that Sida's policy to meet its overall objective of reducing poverty includes gender equality and environmental sustainability. Furthermore, the Swedish development strategies in the Balkans explicitly mention environment and gender as important cooperation areas. However, the review of the regional project in 2007 concluded that in the national plans on statistical development, environmental and gender statistics have not always been given highest priority. The fact that they are included in the regional project therefore seems to indicate that their inclusion reflected Sida, rather than national, priorities.¹¹ Nevertheless, it would appear that there has been progress in these areas, albeit not as great as in the EU and Eurostat's priorities related to the approximation process.

Objectives within each of the five project components are as follows:

Component 1: The Regional Committee (RSC). The specific objective is *to strengthen the RSC planning and sustainability*. The component objective is *to strengthen regional NSI exchanges* and for the RSC to identify:

- methodologies and practices used in the region with the aim to create a statistical system that is in compliance with EU requirements,
- best practices and learning from each NSI's experiences,
- areas of scarce expertise and efficient resource allocation,
- outcome from professional networks.

Component 2: The environmental component is a priority area and has been so since the beginning of the project. For a while this component was replaced and included in the bi-lateral national programmes but was re-introduced into the regional programme in 2010. The component objective is: *Through the cooperation with the statistical offices in the region and Statistics Sweden to produce new indicators and to further develop the existing ones in environmental statistics.*

¹⁰ ibid

¹¹ Review of Statistics Sweden's regional Balkans programme, Ramboll Management, June 2007

Component 3: The survey methodology component has been one of the longest running components of the Sida-funded regional cooperation projects in statistics in the Western Balkans. The regional approach is considered to be appropriate as the topics covered in the training activities are mostly theoretical and are equally relevant and applicable in all NSIs. The component objective is ***development of well trained staff at the NSIs in the region capable of implementing EU standards in the surveys conducted.***

Component 4: The Statistical Summer School includes a mix of lecturing - usually done by experienced statisticians from SCB or university teaching staff from Sweden and other European countries – debating and paper presentations is said to have been met with unequivocal approval by the participants. The component objectives are:

- empowering RSC through its identification of, and respond to, institutional needs through relevant topics determination;
- improvement of subject matter specialists in cooperation, communication and coordination at regional level;
- harmonisation of statistical methodologies and processes according to EU regulations.

Component 5: Gender statistics. Regional activities in gender statistics began in 2004 and have been part of the regional and bi-lateral national projects ever since. Production of statistics segregated by gender was almost non-existent at the NSIs in the Western Balkans before the Sida-funded intervention began. The overall objective of the component is ***through cooperation strengthened production and dissemination of gender-segregated statistics which will be used for reaching required gender equality standards in societies.***

2 Rationale and the purpose of the evaluation

2.1 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

The **first overall objective** of the evaluation is to find out which results has been delivered during the whole 2008-2015 period with respect to the two project documents 2008-2012 and 2013-2016. However, the main focus of the review has been on the second phase, 2013-2016¹². The reviewers have therefore assessed how the project has supported the overall official statistics development in the participating countries and in relation to their desired EU approximation.

This includes results for the National Statistics Institutions in each of the six countries – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (with its three Institutions, one for the State and one for each of the two sub-national Entities), Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia – as well as on the effects on regional cooperation in official statistics. The review also attempts to identify results within each institution that has benefited from the project components, and the implications of the fact that Macedonia and Montenegro were asked, at the beginning of the project, to participate at their own cost. The role of the Regional Statistical Committee and its ability to become self sustainable has also been assessed.

Outcomes and outputs to be produced by the project to achieve the desired results and objectives were outlined in the original project document and later updated during the inception period (2013) and presented to Sida in the inception report. The review therefore assesses the degree to which actual outputs and outcomes match intended outputs and outcomes in each component.

The **second overall objective** is to give advice on how to design a possible next and final project phase 2017-2020, within the framework of the Sida Results strategy for Sweden's reform cooperation for Eastern Europe, The Western Balkans and Turkey.

The primary audience of the evaluation include Sida and the project partners; SCB, RSC and the National Statistic Institutions (NSIs). The results of the evaluation are intended to be used by Sida as an external input in adjusting the programme as

¹² Which is actually the fourth phase counting from the beginning of the regional cooperation.

necessary. The project partners are also interested in this external input so as to appropriately change the project objectives and adjust its components and activity plans to possible new national priorities and areas of intervention as a result of recent policy changes.

2.2 EVALUATION QUESTIONS

In line with the TOR and the Sida/DAC evaluation criteria, the objectives of the evaluation were translated into relevant and specific evaluation questions. Specific questions, organized under the relevant criterion are shown below.

2.2.1 Relevance.

- Q.1.1. To what extent was the intervention relevant to the parties' needs and change processes/plans?

2.2.2 Effectiveness.

- Q.2.1. Has the intervention achieved its overall and specific objectives and its planned results and annual targets and to what extent?
- Q.2.2. Have the outputs been relevant? Were they taken up by the beneficiaries?
- Q.2.3. Have project activities supported the development of the NSI's in a complementary and positive way? Was there a regional added-value?
- Q.2.4. Have project activities positively complemented other development partners' activities, particularly with the EU IPA Multi-Beneficiary Programme, in the participating countries?
- Q.2.5. How much has the SCB specialists contributed in the different activities to achieve the project objectives?

The five questions were intended to allow us to evaluate whether the planned results – both in terms of outputs and outcomes – had been achieved. Where not, the intention was to identify the reasons for not doing so, even in those cases in which the achieved outputs still contributed to the development of statistics in Serbia.

2.2.3 Impact.

Given that SCB's regional cooperation in statistics has a long history, is it possible to say something about impact with respect to:

- Q.3.1. Are the planned and unplanned long-term effects of the programme on society – i.e. data users and beneficiaries – as a whole, positive or negative?

2.2.4 Sustainability.

- Q.4.1. Are the programme outcomes and activities likely to continue after the programme has finished?
- Q.4.2. Are the NSI's able to continue to develop its organisation and activities in the various components?
- Q.4.3. Have the participating NSI's taken an active role in the implementation of the project? To what degree?

Questions about sustainability concern two related aspects: capacity and staffing, on one hand, and allocated financial resources, on the other hand.

2.2.5 Organizational learning.

- Q5.1. Describe and assess the capacity development ‘model’ underlying the project implementation logic?
- Q.5.2. What lessons could be learned for the current and future programmes?
- a) For the current project:
 - Q5.3. Which aspects or streams of activities could be adjusted or dropped?
 - Q5.4. Should new components be considered and if so can the project remain within its stated overall objectives?
- b) For a future programme:
 - Q5.5. Should a future programme focussing on different issues be considered by Sida if a new Regional Strategy gives room for it?
 - Q.5.6. Is it recommended that Sida should fund a next and final project period 2017-2020?
 - Q.5.7. If Sida will fund a next project phase 2017-2020, what could be the management set-up and content of the project?
 - Q.5.8. How should it be organised, in order to be sustainable?
 - Q.5.9. Can and should SCB continue as a long-term partner to NSI’s in this respect?
 - Q.5.10. What were the main risks and what efforts have been made to minimize the effect of unforeseen risks that have arisen during implementation?

All questions about organisational learning also relate to how is the actual project planning and implementation able to incorporate the results of the evaluation. Learning mechanisms and procedures should be envisaged in order to make the assessment exercise effective and useful.

Evidence on the evaluation questions is presented below in the Section 4: Findings.

3 Methodology

The project methodology is based on the interpretation of the TOR for the evaluation. The evaluation team was composed of three team members, the Team Leader (being a core member of the SIPU evaluation team), a senior statistical expert very familiar with the statistical institutions on the Balkans, and a local evaluation expert from Albania with experience of international technical assistance in the Western Balkans developing and monitoring of public sector reform.

Roles and the responsibilities in the two evaluations were divided between the Team Leader (the regional cooperation) and the senior statistical expert (the bi-lateral evaluation). However, the team worked together in accomplishing the tasks for both the evaluations. We believe this approach has strengthened the analysis of the linkages between the two projects as well as the individual evaluations. The overall evaluation was divided into three evaluation phases; an inception phase, a data collection and field visits, and reporting. This is further elaborated below. It should also be noted that the methodology was discussed with Sida and the Swedish Embassy during the inception.

Both evaluations have mainly the same objectives which are two-fold. First, assessments of the results accomplished during the current project phase; secondly, assessments of the options for a continuation of the projects. In addition to these objectives the evaluations included assessing the modalities under which the two projects were implemented.

As indicated above, the evaluation approach was structured around the OECD/DAC standard evaluation criteria by focussing on relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and organizational learning. In our assessments we have used mixed methods that are based on quantitative and qualitative data, such as desk research, key informant interviews, stakeholder consultation, beneficiary interviews and focus groups, when necessary. These different methods complement each other particularly in assessing progress towards the objectives. Whenever no quantitative information is available on the achievement of a given target or objective, the qualitative assessment provided by stakeholders, beneficiaries and users was used to complement the information available.

The evaluation team has paid attention to verifying the validity and reliability of the information sources used as well as the limitations related to the information sources. The team has validated the information received from different sources and critically assessed the validity and reliability of the information received.

3.1 PHASES OF THE EVALUATION

Taking into account the requirements set out in the ToR and the methodological considerations proposed above, the evaluation for reasons of clarity was divided into three phases. The assignment was carried out between September and November 2016. This section describes the content and activities of each of the three phases.

3.1.1 Phase 1 – Inception

During the inception phase the assessment methodology and a more detailed work plan was elaborated. We also developed routines and tools for quality assurance along the lines described below for the purpose of ensuring that the assignment is done in a manner that would maintain a consistent quality and comply with OECD/DAC's Evaluation Quality Standards. A stakeholder mapping was done to guide the Team in determining key informants outside the organisations to be selected for interviews. The purpose of these interviews was to collect views on the two projects from an external perspective and allow triangulation of viewpoints.

The Inception phase started with the Team Leader having initial meetings at Sida, with the Embassy of Sweden in Belgrade as well as SCB in Sweden and with the Balkan Project Office in Belgrade. The purpose of these meetings was to collect information as well as pertinent documentation from Sida and SCB in regards to both the regional and the bi-lateral projects to carry out the initial desk study used in preparation of the methodology and planning the field mission and drafting the inception report.

The finalised methodology, including the stakeholder mapping, work plan and quality assurance system, presented in the Inception Report covering both projects, was submitted to Sida and the Swedish Embassy for comments on October 7th. The inception report was later presented and discussed with both Sida and the Swedish Embassy in Belgrade on October 12th. The meeting with Sida and the Swedish Embassy in Belgrade was to facilitate a discussion of the inception report and clarifications of the client's expectations.

3.1.2 Phase 2 – Data collection, field visit and analysis

Phase 2 took place October 17th – October 28th 2016 and included continued desk study, key informant and stakeholder interviews and focus groups, and field visits.

During the first week of the field visit, the team was stationed in Belgrade to have meetings with the Swedish Embassy, SORS, RSC, and the regional office of SCB. Meetings and interviews also included other key informants such as donors, other international organisations (EU-delegation), users and beneficiaries. The identification of interviewees was done by coordinating with the SCB project office in Belgrade (BPO) and SORS. The interviews in most cases concerned both the bi-lateral project and the regional project.

After the first week the team travelled to meet with the national statistics institutions represented in the RSC to discuss the outcome of the regional cooperation; i.e. Bosnia

and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Albania. In order to accomplish this within a week the evaluation team split up in two groups. One expert travelled to Banja Luka, Sarajevo and Podgorica and the other group travelled to Pristina, Skopje, and Tirana. The team returned to Belgrade after the interviews to share the results of the meetings and to summarize the data before the report writing. At the end of the field visit there was also a meeting with the SCB-BPO.

The Team Leader also travelled to Luxemburg to meet with Eurostat during the following week.

The evaluation team have applied a solid systems approach for data collection combined with well proven methods for project and organisational assessments.

3.1.3 Phase 3 – Reporting

The reporting of the evaluation includes two reports, one for the regional cooperation and one for the bi-lateral cooperation. The drafting of the reports took place in the period of October 28 to November 16th, 2016.

The draft reports (for both projects) are structured around the evaluation questions and DAC criteria when present findings and conclusions and recommendations are presented according to a format discussed during the Inception phase. The draft reports clearly distinguish and present findings, conclusions and recommendations separately from each other. The draft report for the regional project was submitted to Sida and SCB and a workshop was organised shortly thereafter, November 24th for SIDA, SCB, SCB-BPO, and RSC. The final report, reflecting comments from the stakeholders, was presented to Sida on November 30, 2016.

3.2 LIMITATIONS

Impact is difficult to evaluate, even considering all the project phases, as it goes beyond the actual scope of the review. Impact will be indirectly inferred from the partners' perception as well as the stakeholder opinions.

Also, although cost-efficiency is explicitly ruled out as an evaluation criterion – it would imply taking into account costs and financial data for the project – the actual budget utilisation and spending patterns will be briefly overviewed, as an indicator of progress in activity implementation. Yet, the limitations of looking at cost data from this perspective only are evident, as a thorough financial examination should be made to assess efficiency.

As for effectiveness, a detailed analysis would have to take a detailed look at the statistics produced as an effect of project activities and see if they have improved or changed and their quality has shown any visible enhancement.

A final limitation of the review to keep in mind is that the management of the field visit – given the short notice, the short time allowed and the various difficulties on the ground in having meetings – will necessarily affect the depth of the review main conclusions. This review is mainly based on the reports made available to the evaluators, the timely provision of all the information concerning participation, content and format of all project activities. Unfortunately, not all the necessary information was provided to the evaluators in a timely and complete fashion from the project office, which is a strong limitation for a thorough review of the project results and how the project was implemented.

Limitations in understanding how the project was designed and how the project logic was reflected in the way activities were implemented to achieve the desired outcomes will necessarily affect the evaluators' ability to draw conclusions and make recommendations.

Also, proper formulation of results, measures for baseline values for the indicators, definition of intermediate indicator values and tracking of progress by the project management system will be fundamental for a correct evaluation of how key output-to-outcome relationships were put in place. The lack of such correct framework will severely limit the evaluation. Below, we will thus present whatever evaluation assessment was made possible by the existing project monitoring system, with the activities, outputs and outcomes whereby listed. The lack of properly measurable indicators and a weak project monitoring system will make the evaluation exercise less founded.

4 Findings

The ToR set the overall objective to assess actual against intended results delivered by the project from February 2008 to the end of 2016. In practice, our main source of evidence for our assessment of the previous project period (2008-2012) was the final report for that period.¹³ The evaluation has therefore given priority to assessing results in the current phase 2013-2016.

Attempts to validate and triangulate the output/outcome with tangible data have proven difficult. In this case we have had to resort to qualitative information provided to us during our interviews and this has been complicated since most of the participants we have interviewed were not sure of exactly when they participated or if it was in the regional or national programme. Thus we resorted to providing a summary of the results of the third phase of the regional project as described in the final report as a point of departure for the fourth phase.

4.1 FINDINGS ON THE PRECEDING PROJECT PHASE 2008 – 2012

The regional project 2008-2012 had a similar structure to the current project with a few structured components and with a flexibility to include new streams in an *ad hoc* manner; provided that more than two of the members in the RSC were interested in the topic and agreed. The novelty for that project phase was the introduction of the Regional Statistics Committee in 2008 as a means for steering the development of the project and for setting the future course for the regional programme. At that time a document for providing guidelines for the Committee was developed, but unfortunately it only laid out the meeting formalities and not the specific purpose or mandate of the Committee. At that time any activity in excess of SEK 300,000 had to be referred to Sida for approval.

The main focus of the project was statistical methodology, gender statistics, and environmental statistics. Other areas were metadata, census support in the regional projects, data collection, communication and dissemination, energy statistics, basic

¹³ Regional Cooperation in Statistics in the Western Balkans, Final report February 2008 – December 2012, Statistics Sweden, undated

course in macroeconomics. In the absence of a detailed implementation plan, a logical framework or any other result based framework, we can only report on the results presented in the final report. We cannot compare these actual results against intended results. During the project period the following main results were achieved:

- 48 young statisticians from the Western Balkans region were trained in all phases of survey methodology in 2010 and 2012;
- 113 young statisticians from the region (including 8 university students and staff members) were trained in writing thematic papers and in presenting and debating in the Balkans Summer Schools in statistics;
- Each Summer School had a special theme. Some participants have participated in the past, and they are becoming more and more sophisticated in their presentations.
- Training in statistical methods was highly appreciated in countries without higher education opportunities in statistics, which applies to all countries in the Western Balkans.
- Theoretical knowledge and capacity to conduct a pilot and a full-scale time use survey (TUS) was developed.
- Through the support of the regional project all NSIs in the region regularly published the Women and Men booklet. New indicators were discussed in workshops and added regularly.
- Development of communication plans (including production of publishing calendars, strategies in dealing with the media, plans to introduce internal communication tools, etc.) for the NSIs in the region;
- NSIs in the region completed calculations of emissions of green house gases from transportation and waste. The methodologies used were in line with recommendations from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).
- A select group of statisticians from the region (including RSC members) were trained in results-based management (RBM)
- Capacity building and transfer of know-how enabled calculation of gender pay gap between men and women.
- Practical knowledge was acquired in using population censuses for gender statistics.

The staff interviewed was positive and had good experience from their participation in any of the programme and that the knowledge they gained was mostly possible to implement in the workplace.

4.2 FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS ON PROJECT MANAGEMENT IN THE CURRENT PHASE

The management structure of the project consists of three different actors; the SCB-ICO in Stockholm, SCB-BPO in Belgrade and the RSC. The SCB in Stockholm is the main owner of the project since they are the signatory of the contract and thus have

the main responsibility for how the money is being used. This authority is delegated to the project office (BPO) in Belgrade for the day-to-day management of the project. There is also a project coordinator in the SCB-ICO office in Stockholm acts as an intermediate person to facilitate the contacts with the experts within SCB and experts that sometimes are recruited from the outside. The accounting takes place at SCB in Stockholm. The BPO is the hub that coordinates everything locally. It arranges for the meetings of RSC, plans and organises the workshops, seminars and other activities, and is responsible for the logistical arrangements. The BPO is also responsible for putting together the ToR for the experts delivering project activities. It should also be noted that the BPO also coordinates the bi-lateral project in Serbia provide support to the projects in Kosovo and Albania, but to a limited degree. The project office is funded out of the budget set within the agreement for the regional statistic cooperation, with approximately 50 percent of the funds made available by Sida.

Project management responsibility rests with the BPO. Without dwelling too much on the details there are some inherent project management problems. During our evaluation we have asked for some basic monitoring information in regards to timelines, plans for implementation vs. actual implementation of activities to monitor the ratio of planned versus implemented activities, comparisons of budget versus actually spending, output indicators such as number of days of interventions produced, number of participants trained and so on. This has not been readily available. In most cases the office staff has been able to put together the information but the time it took and that the data were mostly unprocessed and not aggregated indicates that the M&E system is weak and there is room for improvement.

Monitoring actual against intended results would be challenging in a project that aims to build individual competence rather than institutional capacity and places a premium on flexibility and accommodating special requests for seminars and workshops. Additionally, monitoring at input and output level is one thing but linking the output to outcome is a much harder task; especially when the outcome takes place in a different place a long time after the delivery of the training. Thus it becomes important to have a structured and systematic monitoring regime and to maintain a good project database that enables planning. There are a lot of data available, but data must also be processed and used. By collecting and organizing both quantitative and qualitative data as well as having recent and up-dated financial data readily available this can be analyzed and the statistics can be used to make well-founded decisions in the management of the programme, to stay focused on the desired outcomes where aggregated data makes it possible to analyze impact over time and trends. The conclusion therefore is that having an exit strategy that is feasible means that the relationship between the RSC and the BPO needs to be clarified. If the expectation is that the RSC shall have a much more independent status then the playing field must be re-defined and the rules changed.

4.3 FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS BY COMPONENT

The project covers five main components as listed above, but from a financial budgetary point of view it has six components considering the financing of the Balkans Project Office. The regional project needs to be assessed in a different way than a regular development cooperation project. The main difference is the composition of the budget. The total budget for the third phase 2013 – 2016 is almost 27.6 MSEK. Of this is 13 MSEK (48%) is allocated for operation of the Balkans Project Office, 4.2 MSEK (15%) is allocated for the Regional Statistics Committee for meetings and ad hoc activities (3.8 MSEK)¹⁴ and approximately only 2.1 – 2.5 MSEK (8%) is allocated for each of the four components. Thus the assessment of the regional project in terms of its results must exclude the BPO since the operation of the BPO that consumes nearly half of the project resources.

4.3.1 The Regional Statistics Committee

The Regional Statistics Committee was first established in 2008 and was described as a reference group with the task of proposing activities to SCB and also to approve activities to be implemented¹⁵. The RSC is now listed as a component in the project plan and is to some extent regarded as a development activity with defined development objectives.

As discussed previously in this report the RSC consists of one member from each participating country and the BPO team leader. The RSC meet 3-4 times per year and the venue changes each time. So far the RSC has met 11 times in 2013 – 2016 and in the previous phase the RSC met 13 times for committee meetings. In June 2014 the RSC decided to meet without any delegate from SCB to try a more independent approach, however, this meeting did not take place and the reason for this is unclear. All in all 18 people representing the six SNIs have been participating in the meetings and the representation has been fairly stable during the project period. The representative from Kosovo has participated all eleven times and was also the chairperson during 3 meetings and the representative from BHAS¹⁶ has participated in 9 meetings and was chairperson during 4 meetings¹⁷. In most cases the representatives stay on for a long period which is important for an effective

¹⁴ The RSC have the option of propose upto eleven so called ad hoc activities which is included in the RSC budget.

¹⁵ Terms of Reference: Statistics Sweden's Regional Project in South Eastern Europe, Robert Backlund, Sida, 2008-02-28.

¹⁶ Bosnia and Herzegovina Agency for Statistics

¹⁷ Chairpersons came from SORS 2012-2013, KAS 2013-2014, BHAS 2014-2015, MONSTAT 2016

committee and to create sustainability. In some cases there has been a rather frequent change of delegates which may hamper the effectiveness and continuity of the committee. The delegates are there not primarily as representatives of their organisation but to a larger extent form a body that coordinates and implements a regional programme that is relevant for both the NSIs, the countries, EU compliance as well as for the donor. This may not be so obvious for all the delegates or the NSIs.

The RMF¹⁸ includes a number of objectives to measure the performance of the committee. There are a total of seven objectives and 10 connected indicators. All except two indicators are qualitative and the output to outcome linkages is weak. For instance, an objective stating improved efficiency must have a baseline to compare it with. There is a long-term goal, which is not expressed explicitly, but can be found in the results monitoring framework and that is to strengthen the planning and sustainability of RSC to at some point independently run the regional activities.

The RSC currently acts like an advisory group, although it should really be more of a steering committee with much clearer mandate, responsibility and authority if the project objectives for RSC are to be attained. The rules setting out the RSC's role have not been updated since 2008 and are to some extent outdated. They do not reflect how certain responsibilities have been transferred to the committee. For example, in the beginning the chairperson was appointed by SCB, which effectively was the BPO Team Leader. This changed in 2009¹⁹ and a new chair was elected out of the members from the participating NSIs.

The main issue is the relationship between the BPO and the RSC. The intended role of the RSC is to come with suggestions and proposals for activities within the regional programme and it is also expected to take decisions on the activities to implement. There is also an indicator to measure this. The question is how much latitude the committee has in making its decisions, because it does not have much control of the situation. The procedure for adding an activity is i) a proposal is made by a member of RSC, ii) this is discussed in the committee, iii) if this is seconded by two or more members the activity is approved. Then the activity will be processed by the BPO in developing the ToR, calculating the cost, find a consultant that is available and setting a date. The evaluation team has not found any indication that the issue is returned back to the committee after the ToR has been developed, the

¹⁸ Results and Monitoring Framework

¹⁹ Regional Cooperation Project in South Eastern Europe, project Plan for the period 2013-2016, 26 November 2012

consultant has been selected and the budget been estimated for final approval. Interviews with committee members reveal that this does not take place.

The ambiguity therefore is whether the RSC is a partner of the BPO or is it a beneficiary of the project? Expecting the RSC to function as a steering committee without a proper strategic document that clearly spells out its mandate, responsibility and authority is not realistic. Especially since the RSC is not privy to some basic information such as financial issues for the implemented activities and how much of the budget is remaining within the different components. According to the members asked, they never discuss the budget which is controlled by SCB. According to the BPO Team Leader it is not possible to get a break-down on component level from ICO on a periodical basis. Cost summary is provided quarterly on the project level.

Considering the important task that is being lodged upon the RSC the evaluators would have expected some capacity building or some teambuilding exercise for the group to enable it to develop some strategies and prerequisites for managing the regional project and mapping out its future, post project. Neither was done. It also appears a missed opportunity that the group has not met with SCB in Stockholm or with Sida for planning purposes. There was a request from the RSC members to organize a study tour to Scandinavian countries to learn from SCB and the “Nordic cooperation” model.²⁰ The reason for not organizing this tour is not known.

When discussing the issue of sustainability and the prospect of running the programme direct from the RSC, the members seemed reluctant to engage. They rely very much on the BPO as a secretariat for the coordination, planning and providing logistics support. The BPO is also providing inputs for availability of experts, cost, area of expertise, and development of ToR for experts. The inherent lack of capacity at the respective NSIs is considered a hurdle for increased engagement by the NSIs and the RSC members.

Conclusion: *Needless to say, the appreciation of the regional programme is proclaimed in all of the statistics office we have visited. All from the Directors to the statistician have explained their appreciation of the set-up and its flexibility and thus being a perfect complement the IPA support which all of them enjoy. The opportunities for learning from others are the main success of the regional programme, not only from local and regional experts but primarily by meeting and creating colleagues. The real question to find out is how valuable and value-adding they think the programme is when it needs to be coordinated by themselves. In a long-*

²⁰ RSC meeting notes November 20, 2012

term perspective the availability of local and regional experts must be ensured in cooperation with experts from perhaps SCB and other European institutes.

The RSC is a vital asset for the sustainability of regional cooperation when, at some point in time, the Sida support to the region will come to an end. Most likely there will be changes to the BPO first by reduction of its resources and its capacity to coordinate all the logistics. There will be a need to capacitate the RSC to find an organisational set-up that can manage coordination and cooperation. Such a capacity building programme is long overdue. The committee should also be structured as a board and the members must have the fullest confidence of their management with the mandate of making decisions then and there. The operational and strategic conditions need to be mapped and the willingness of the regional NSI's in continuing regional coordination and engagement by themselves must be assessed before embarking in this direction.

The steps taken so far are small but still steps in the right direction, assigning the chairperson to one of the members, co-hosting the summer school, and having INSTAT doing the evaluations of the activities are just some evidence that it is possible. As long as there are bi-lateral projects funded by Sida there will be a need for a regional project funded by Sida because of the complementary nature to the bi-lateral programmes as well as to both the national and multi-beneficiary IPA projects. The need to avoid overlapping between different donor funded programmes should not lead to not utilizing the flexibility of reinforce with training the gaps which is not filled by e.g. IPA programmes.

One conclusion which not shall be unnoticed is the cost –efficiency of running regional programme. Most of the time there is only a smaller number of persons within an institution that require a specific form of training. By organizing a regional activity the cost can be shared along with the experience. The drawback from regional training is that it invariably does not induce institutional change. The methodology use during the workshops and training implies transfer of knowledge to a person. The challenge is in all organisations to find vehicles to create institutional change. The regional committee needs to look at the theory of change which shall ensure that training given more often than now will be transferred to changes in the workplace, upgrading of procedures, and a more efficient working procedure.

One challenge which needs to be faced is the allotment of the number of participants among the members in the RSC. Normally, 3 participants from each NSI are permitted; however since Bosnia and Herzegovina has a set-up with three institutes they are allowed to send 9 participants. This has been commented upon during our discussions. The problem is mainly that sometimes the workshop is captured by their specific problems.

4.3.2 Environmental statistics

Environmental statistics (ES) has been one of the priority areas in the Sida funded regional statistics programme at inception in 2002 and while the importance of ES was growing for the NSIs in the region the ES component was included in the national bi-lateral development programmes. In 2010 the RSC identified a need for ES which renewed the regional approach with the implementation of two seminars in regards to a) the introduction of environmental accounts and sharing the experience of waste statistics, and b) calculation of green house gas emissions. The feedback from the NSIs resulted in the RSC meeting in November 2011 took a decision to include an environmental component in the regional project.²¹

After the first year (2013) it was realized that in the emission to air component little progress had been made between the first workshop in 2010 and the second in 2013; the exception was in BiH. It was determined that environmental statistics were not a high priority area in the Balkans²². In response, a meeting was convened in 2014 to discuss the developments and priorities in the environmental statistics area. The outcome of that meeting was a new plan to better respond to the needs of the NSIs. The activities of this altered plan are presented below.

During the period 2013-2016 a total of 9 seminars/workshops have been organised, one in 2013, one in 2014, three in 2015, and four in 2016 and there are four additional activities planned for 2017. In the project plan there were a total of seven activities planned which indicate the RSC have made use of their option to include extra activities. The implemented activities so far are a three-part seminar on “Joint Inland Water Questionnaire, three Environmental Statistics workshops, two on Environmental Taxes, and one workshop on Material Flow Accounts. These activities have been attended by 132 participants (76 women and 56 men). The participation is fairly evenly spread between the NSIs, and it appears as if the institutes have prioritised topics of specific interest to them as none of the NSIs have participated in all of the activities. The most populated activities were Environmental Taxes and Material Flow Accounts. The experts have come from Sweden except for the seminar in environmental taxes when one of the experts came from Eurostat.

The requirements from Eurostat for EU compliance are mainly concentrated on economic accounts, regulations, waste and hazardous substances, water statistics, air emission and physical energy flow accounts. According to Eurostat there is yet not so

²¹ Regional Cooperation in Statistics in the Western Balkans, Final report, February 2008 – December 2012

²² Progress report January – December 2013

much emphasis on environmental statistics and it does not consider that there is any overlap.²³ This also attested by the participants we met and is more of complementary nature to the national programmes. A uniform view found in all the meetings is that if it were not for the environmental component in the Sida regional project, as well as the national projects, it would not have been given much attention.

Interviews with participants have indicated that the topics included are very relevant and are important for their on-going work. In one NSI waste statistics will now be produced regularly and statistics for water is improved. The project has made visible and tangible impact. The project is considered to be well structured with the workshops that create synergies with the IPA on-the-job training and it contributes to coordinate and harmonize questionnaires and methodologies in the region. The workshops enabled the participants to learn from each other and to find new ways to implement when returning to work.

In a limited survey among 22 previous participants in the environmental statistics activities more than 60 percent had participated in more than two of the environment activities. Seventy five percent regarded the activities to be relevant to highly relevant, all of them were able to apply the knowledge and 86% had been able to add new or improve existing working methods.

Conclusion: *The decision of re-introduce the environmental component appears not to have been backed by sufficient information of the priorities and capacity of the NSIs. Thanks to the flexibility of the project and a feedback system to the project office and the RSC the problem was mitigated and the focus of the environmental statistics support was re-oriented. It appears from the feedback we have received during the interviews that the new topics have been relevant and have been possible to put to use. The results framework from 2015 indicates some progress in some of the indicators. However, in assessing results it should be noted that some of the indicators are somewhat ambiguous and difficult to relate to outcomes since they appear to be more output related. The reported outcome differs a lot between the different NSI's. Judging from the feedback from participants, the environmental activities seem to be more effective if there is a national bi-lateral Sida funded project at the same time. Where there is no bi-lateral project, progress appears to be much slower. The participation from Montenegro and Macedonia was very little during 2013-2015 but picked up substantially in 2016.*

The continuation of this component in a future phase of the regional cooperation should be based on a careful analysis and discussion within the RSC with input from

²³ Meeting with Eurostat officials in Luxemburg.

the NSI's. Notwithstanding the importance of being aligned with the Sida Result strategy for the Region the component needs to be designed and structured in such a way that it provides added-value to the majority of the NSI's. It should also be taken into consideration that even if the focus of Eurostat on environmental statistics is confined to a few areas, with the on-going pressure on countries to work according to the Paris agenda, their attitude may soon change and continued coordination with Eurostat may need greater prioritisation in this area.

4.3.3 Survey methodology

Assistance in the field of survey methodology started in 2005 and has been the longest running component of the SIDA-funded regional cooperation project in statistics in the Western Balkans. Previous stages of the project have contributed to competence development in a number of areas related with survey methodologies in the area of key statistics (HBS, LFS, SBS) and improvement of applied methodologies across the NSIs.

The component is a crosscutting component that covers several thematic statistical areas and has contributed directly to an improved quality of statistics in core statistical areas. As such, it is highly relevant to the national strategies in the region, development plans for the individual NSIs, as well as the region's cooperation with EU in the field of statistics and increased compliance with EU statistical standards. Work in survey methodology is also relevant to Sida's strategy of cooperation for the Western Balkans, linking to the overall good governance objectives through improvement in the availability of credible evidence in support of evidence-based policymaking.

According to the project document, despite involvement of a significant number of young statisticians, the demand for the course was still strong at the time of the project preparation due to a variety of reasons, including an absence of formal statistical education at the university level, high staff turnover and the lack of national budget funding to support in-house training programmes.

In the first years of the regional cooperation programme the trainee pool was composed of both senior and junior statisticians and the duration of the course was five weeks. Now, the survey methodology course is a biennial event organised over three separate weeks and is designed to target primarily young statisticians who are trained through a combination of theoretical and practical training with an incremental approach in the level of studies. The same course curriculum has been used by SCB experts in training various generations of young statisticians in the current project stage. It is unclear whether the shortened course duration has led towards a reduction in the number and/or level of studies.

Three standard survey methodology courses were conducted in this project stage, with the participation of 47 experts from the NSIs, of whom 33 were women. The trainings were led by a number of returning SCB experts and regional experts from the Western Balkans have contributed in at least two of the three courses.

Three 3-day specific methodology courses were organised during this project stage upon request of the RSC: a workshop on non-sampling errors in 2013, a course on imputation (2015), and workshop on sampling coordination (2016). The activities have been reported as highly relevant to the needs and priorities of all NSIs and linking in directly with emerging challenges. Some of these subjects have been further enhanced in the summer school component. These three courses attracted 67 participants of which 41 were women.

Activities in this area are reported as having achieved high standards and have contributed to filling an important gap in professional and institutional development within the NSIs. All participants note that the Sida supported SCB assistance is unique in the area of general survey methodology and contributed towards increased quality in statistical production over the years. The survey methodology course appears to have been designed as a basic training course for practitioners in statistics. This view is also supported in interviews with key beneficiaries and SCB project office, which highlight the high percentage of staff turnover and the lack of formal training as the key rationale underpinning the persistent demand for the course across NSIs. Nevertheless, it appears that staff turnover is no longer significant in the majority of NSIs. On the other hand, all NSIs report the need to increase staffing levels despite statutory limitations for recruitment across many of the countries.

All NSIs in the region have dedicated survey methodology units. Nevertheless, the course has targeted thematic experts/units who are not involved in methodological issues directly but who manage the different survey instruments. It was reported that attendance in the course has contributed directly to a better understanding of the problems and application of the concept learned to everyday work. At least 8% of the total staff of the NSIs has received the training in the last three years, on frequent occasions staff has attended the course more than once.²⁴

Conclusion: *The survey methodology support is highly appreciated across all NSIs and is reported as providing important contributions to competence development at the individual level leading to immediate application at the institutional level through improved methodologies and solutions to challenges. A remarkably high share of the NSI staff has benefitted from the course over the years and attendance data indicate that it may be approaching saturation levels. The course was undoubtedly highly needed and produced good outcomes for the work. However the capacity development approach did not embed elements of sustainability through provision of*

²⁴ In a sample of 118 respondents to the evaluation questionnaire sent out by the evaluation team, 58 had attended survey methodology course training, of which 21 has attended more than once and 11 more than three times.

Training of Trainers courses and/or providing incentives for in-house trainings of young professionals. First steps seem to have now been taken in this direction through increased involvement of regional experts or establishment of training centres through bilateral projects, as is the case in Albania. It is recommended that in eventual future cooperation programme the general survey methodology component is kept at minimum levels and redesigned to target specific methodological challenges arising from the application of new surveys and/or standards; or it is provided under the specific thematic cooperation areas.

4.3.4 Gender statistics

According to the project document the objective of this component is “to strengthen production and dissemination of the gender-segregated statistics which will be used for reaching required gender equality standards in societies”. The underlying assumption was that there was strong demand by the NSIs for continuing work in the area of gender statistics. Following the assistance provided in the area during the previous years, significant know-how had been transferred to participating NSIs in calculating the gender gap as well as the assistance provided in the publication and expansion of the scope of Women and Men booklets.

The 2013 - 2016 project phase aimed at continuing the development of gender statistics, focusing on i) gender-pay gap (continuation from previous phase), ii) violence and victimisation statistics, and iii) use of population census data in production of gender statistics.

The gender component is relevant to the SIDA strategy for the Western Balkans, which highlights focus on increased enjoyment of human rights...; fulfilling of national and international commitments in gender equality; and reduction in gender based violence.

Relevance of the gender component towards national strategic objectives is more difficult to determine. A previous evaluation of the regional project in statistics found that the gender component was mostly supply driven²⁵. At the time of the current evaluation, there is still no clear evidence of internal demand for gender related statistics at the national level. Although all countries have committed to working towards improved gender equality and reduction of gender based violence in their national strategic frameworks; the official statistics programmes do not include gender related statistics. It should be noted, however that representatives of the NSIs have indicated interventions in the gender area as highly relevant to the national

²⁵ Review of Statistics Sweden's regional Balkans Programme, RAMBOLL Management, June 2007.

context and have indicated increasing – if not persistent - demand from national data users. The latter is also evidenced by minutes of the Regional Statistics Committee.

Work in gender related statistics is not directly linked with EU accession priorities. Eurostat is mainly focused on providing support for the countries to achieve what is required in the legislation to comply with EU requirements and as far as gender is concerned some of the statistical legislation requires gender break-downs. But the focus is more on statistical infrastructure, institutional and governance aspects, macro-economic statistics, business statistics, and social statistics and gender is not a priority.²⁶ The statistical requirements compendium is a reference document for the EU acquis in statistics and module 7.1.32 deals with gender and discrimination. The data requirements mentioned are the Structural Earning Survey (SES) and the Gender Pay Gap (GPG). The GPG is based on the SES.²⁷

The European Commission's Strategy for Statistical Cooperation with the Enlargement Countries 2014 – 2020 highlights key areas in social statistics linked with demography, labour statistics, living conditions, social protection, population and migration statistics. Gender mainstreaming in these survey instruments has been targeted through the work on gender mainstreaming in the population census and employment surveys. NSI representatives indicate a growing interest of European authorities towards gender indicators, including linkages with Sustainable Development Indicators (SDIs) and general development objectives in the area of economic development, employment and human rights.

Seven workshops and seminars were organised in the area of gender statistics during 2013 – 2016, with the participation of 135 experts of which more than 70% were women. Activities typically target the same group of NSI experts, with the majority returning for follow up activities.

Activities under this component have focused primarily on the gender pay gap subcomponent, further developing on results achieved during the previous cooperation stage. Three of the seven activities in the last three years were focused on the Structure of Earnings Survey (SES), aiming to enable NSIs calculate Gender Pay Gap (GPG). Respondents report a satisfactory level of knowledge acquired through the regional workshop. However, only Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia have succeeded in carrying out SES. The other countries do not have any formal plans to include SES and GPG in the relevant statistical plans, due to limited financial

²⁶ Minutes from a meeting at Eurostat in Luxembourg, November 8, 2016, Claudia Junker, Ferenc Galik

²⁷ Statistical Requirements Compendium, 2016 Edition, Eurostat

resources available. The GPG is collected annually from EU member states and is to be based on the SES.²⁸

One workshop was held in the area of census and gender (2013), which reportedly provided inputs to the elaboration of census reports and studies in the region. The majority of NSIs had already advanced in the area by 2013, while the event served primarily the needs of BiH Institute, where the census had just been conducted. Victimisation and gender based violence statistics was one of the areas highlighted under key outputs in the Project documents and one regional seminar was held in early 2014 on violence at work statistics. However the subcomponent was dropped due to lack of interest by the NSIs.

Gender Equality Index (GEI) is an emerging priority area under the gender component. Following a study visit to Serbia during 2015 for the publication of the Serbian GEI, the other NSIs took an interest in a component and attended a regional workshop in 2016 on the GEI calculation, which was organised with the cooperation of the European Gender Equality Institute (EIGE). All NSIs in the region report an increased interest in the subject while acknowledging relatively lower level of priority due to limited resources.

Conclusion: Overall, the outputs in the gender component were partially achieved. Achievement of objectives related to individual competence development has been satisfactory, but these have not been incorporated into institutional workplans and methodologies due to limited resources available. There is no evidence of specific achievement in increase of gender statistics demand from users; nor improvement of formal relationships between users and producers. Women and men publications, which were one of the highlighted achievements in the previous stages, have been published periodically by all NSIs; often through other external assistance support. The current stage of the project did not work on this publication despite requests by the RSC committee²⁹. Some of these needs have however been addressed through the bilateral projects.

4.3.5 The Summer School

The Summer School in the framework of the regional cooperation project was first held in 2006. Under the previous cooperation projects the Summer School was a stream in the survey methodology component focusing on methodology topics, initially conceived as a regional equivalent to the statistical summer school in Örebro.

²⁸ According to the Eurostat requirements compendium (2016) module 07.1.33 the SES and GPG is referenced and the collection of data is based on a “gentlemen’s agreement”.

²⁹ RSC meeting minutes, April 2013.

Between 2008 and 2012 27 statisticians from the region attending the statistical **Summer School in Örebro**, Sweden, which provided a more focus on theoretical knowledge in methodology.

Over the years, the concept for the regional summer school evolved beyond a targeted focus on strictly methodological issues, to coverage of general statistical areas. This was partly motivated by rollout of population censuses in the region during 2010 and 2011.

The Summer School component has also been met with overwhelming approval and appreciation by all the NSIs in the region. Subsequently the topic for the summer school has been different every year, based on the stakeholder's needs. In the current project phase the Summer School was established as a separate component, given the shift from the original design as well as general high degree of support among beneficiaries. Like the survey methodology component, it is highly relevant to the context given its indirect contribution to improvement in the quality of statistical production and compliance with EU standards through competence development for both junior and senior staff.

Between 2008 and 2012 27 statisticians from the region attended the statistical Summer School in Örebro, Sweden. The new project phase did not support further training in Örebro, reallocating emphasis to the strengthening of the regional summer school, complemented with the survey methodology course. It must be noted however, that the Örebro Summer School covers training modules beyond the scope of the Sida/SCB survey methodology course. 113 young statisticians participated in the summer school in the previous project stage and 91 statisticians participated in the current project stage (2013 – 2016)³⁰. Of the latter 61 were women and 15 participants from outside the beneficiary countries (Croatia and Moldova). In 2008 and 2009 participants included university undergraduates and staff from Macedonia and Montenegro. There is no indication of further university involvement in the subsequent years based on the reports and stakeholder interviews. From 2012 local/regional lecturers were also engaged in the summer schools.

According to the final report of the previous project stage³¹, the summer school is the "...biggest success of the regional approach to assistance in the area of statistics in the Western Balkans. A mix of lecturing, usually done by experienced statisticians

³⁰ Due to a no-cost extension 2008-2012 there were five summer schools while there have been four in this phase.

³¹ Regional Cooperation in Statistics in the Western Balkans, Final Report February 2008 – December 2012, SCB.

from SCB or university teaching staff from Sweden and other European countries, debating and paper presentations has been met with unequivocal approval by the participants...”. Interviews with stakeholders at NSIs uniformly confirm appreciation of the summer school achievements both at the individual and institutional level. The component is demand driven; the choice of the annual topic is subject to the decision by the RSC. As such, it has addressed a series of salient issues at the appropriate time, including work on census before 2011; NACE Revision2 classifications to respond to challenges in complying with the introduction of the new standard; and more recently schools on administrative registers, use of auxiliary information and imputation in line with the NSIs increasing efforts to introduce new or improved methodologies.

The component objective is to develop NSI regional interaction and sharing of methods and solutions. It is our view that this objective has been fully met, along with the RSC’s role in defining topics and participants. Beneficiaries enthusiastically report that the Summer School, in a similar fashion as other activities within this project, is a unique opportunity for networking, exchanging experiences with colleagues and benchmarking against other NSIs. In addition, the summer school appears to have contributed directly to the improvement of analytical, writing and presentation skills for participants³² as was reported by both SCB and the participants.

Commitment to and ownership of the NSIs over the Summer School appears to have strengthened over the years. Management of the event organisation was entrusted to the NSI of the host country. All NSIs have shared costs for the Summer School through covering part of their own staff expenses. Participants have actively engaged as peer reviewers and some have served as co-lecturers together with SCB staff.

While the abovementioned objectives/targets have been met satisfactorily, it is difficult to judge on the level of achievement of the institutional change objective for the Summer School component, given that i) a logical sequence between outputs and outcomes as defined in the RMF cannot be easily implied; ii) it is not possible to measure the degree of updated methods and/or the Summer Schools contribution to those. SCB has acknowledged this shortcoming in its 2015 progress report.

Conclusion: *Overall the summer school component has been highly successful and the majority of objectives have been achieved. It has been responsive to beneficiary demand and has contributed in a timely fashion to capacity building for statisticians across the region in exploring emerging challenges in statistics, networking and*

³² Target in the Inception Report was to train 6% of statisticians by 2016, to increase coverage levels to 18%. The number of participants has fallen slightly short of the target.

benchmarking. The commitment of the NSIs is adequate, contributing to the choice of topic through the RSC; organisation, and cost sharing. The project has taken some first steps towards ensuring longer-term sustainability through the promotion of independent organisation by NSI as well as engagement of regional lecturers. However, partnership with universities could be a more viable channel towards sustainability. It has been acknowledged in the design of the Summer School but apparently no longer pursued.

The summer school is still not self-sustainable but there are good prospects in the future, in particular if the initiative is hosted in cooperation with universities. In case university cooperation can be achieved, it may also serve as an entry point to foster development of survey methodology courses at the national/regional level.

4.4 OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF EVALUATION CRITERIA

4.4.1 Relevance.

Q.1.1. To what extent was the project relevant to the parties' needs and change processes/plans?

In relation to the result strategy, the needs of the NSI's and the EU accession objectives, it would seem as if the project is generally relevant.

- In line with the SIDA strategy of cooperation with Western Balkans, which highlights support to:
 - Governance and regional cooperation (general); and
 - Support to environment and gender equality (particular to relevant components).
- Respondents also highlight relevance of objectives to individual and common NSI goals
- The intervention is relevant to the needs of the NSIs; formulated with input by member countries.
 - Relevant to countries' EU accession objectives;
 - However there is no evidence that all objectives are equally relevant and/or hold the same priority in terms of development towards EU standards (i.e. gender seems marginal to EU accession).
- High flexibility appreciated as enables programme meeting emerging priorities/needs.

Focus of project has been on individual knowledge improvement leading to institutional changes. Outputs have generally been well targeted to bring about the desired outcomes. However there is space for improvement in the project design and activities. The number and content of activities is not always clearly explained in the plan and linkage of how and to what extent these activities contribute to desired

outcomes is not explicit. Measurable indicators for the outputs and outcomes are lacking, in particular indicators that would acknowledge the different stages of development in NSIs.³³

4.4.2 Effectiveness.

Q.2.1. Has the project achieved its overall and specific objectives and its planned results and annual targets and to what extent?

Q.2.2. Have the outputs been relevant? Were they taken up by the beneficiaries?

i. RSC committee:

- RSC has developed moderate cohesion as a group. Changes in membership over the years do not appear to have impaired its effectiveness even though in some cases it has been frequent.
- RSC operational in providing input to activity plans, providing guidance and support in relevant NSIs regarding coordination of activities (achievement of institutional effectiveness project goals), implementation of post-evaluation of activities.
- However RSC remains largely dependent on BPO (institutional goals)
 - Decision making mandate is granted by national institutes.
 - Good ownership over programmatic aspects of project
 - The RSC and individual NSIs have very limited ownership over allocation of human and financial resources of the project, which may have impaired their ability to prioritise project activities. The segregation of the management function from RSC's authority appears to have been supported by BPO, which appears to have refrained from subjecting these decisions to RSC.
- RSC has not reach a level of independence required to manage the project in a sustainable level, a systematic institutional development plan is not part of the objectives
- Exit strategy for a sustainable future is missing

Relevance of output:

After a relatively slow start in the beginning the number of activities and participants picked-up.

³³ It must be noted however, that a detailed logical framework highlighting objectives and outcomes for each individual NSI would be quite demanding and probably not realistic. Nevertheless, the project plan could have highlighted the main challenges each NSI was facing in each field and which countries the given activities would benefit the most.

ii. *Environmental statistics*

- Have contributed towards substantial knowledge transfer in previous and current project stages. In most countries interventions were concurrent with national SIDA projects as well as other donors (EU)
- Individual objectives: 9 activities (132 participants, 76 women) in various areas carried out over current project period. Participants report satisfactory results but overwhelmingly still need further training.
- Institutional change: All countries have started work in producing MFA, preparation for environmental taxes (stage of development highly variable between countries); methodology on water and waste statistics has expanded/diversified in a number of countries. Survey on waste statistics carried out in a several countries and piloted in others, in line with project goals
- Institutional effectiveness: Intervention supported production of new indicators/ improvement of methodologies but regular reporting of indicators not achieved in all countries. Majority of indicators still not part of compulsory statistical production.
- Institutional goals: Quality and quantity of data reported as increasing but not yet satisfactory.

Relevance of Outputs:

Outputs are relevant across the region for the majority of subcomponents as will eventually become compulsory statistics under EU framework; but different stage of development leads to carrying degrees of engagement. In general emission to air was not relevant for all; while all stakeholders mention MFA, environmental taxes and water/waste statistics as highly relevant. SIDA regional project appears to have pioneered work in these areas.

iii. *Survey methodology*

- 47 staff trained in survey methodology held every other year during last project phase (3 week course)
- Three extra courses implemented, non-sampling errors, imputation, sampling coordination. 67 participants.
- Most staff has undergone training, current project phase serves primarily young recruits
- Very highly regarded by beneficiaries as an introductory course to applied statistics. Justified with high turnover of staff and high percentage of newcomers; but this does not appear to be the case any more in most NSIs.
- Activities seem to have targeted beginner/medium levels of knowledge; less reported focus on emerging challenges (exception i.e. imputation courses introduced by RSC, etc.).
- Training of trainers is not achieved, number of local trainers not achieved.

Relevance of Outputs:

Some of the indicators are very hard to substantiate or not achieved. Outputs are achieved to 50%. Outputs are moderately relevant. There is question of relevance of maintaining this course.

iv. *Summer School*

- 91 participants from NSIs in 4 Summer School activities over the current project period
- Summer School contributed to improved individual knowledge and theoretical and practical presentations
- Increased involvement of NSIs in organisation and staff commitment remains high (inst change)
- Evidence of NSI staff contributing to the summer school as trainers/lecturers
- Difficult to assess direct relationship w/ statistical production but the summer school activities are reported to be successful by all stakeholders
- Addresses vast array of topics including from outside project components/often innovative; linked with emerging priorities (i.e. NACE; imputation etc.)
- Some indicators not possible to assess, unclear output-outcome relationship.

Relevance of Outputs:

Highly relevant for all participants as a good instrument to benchmark against new standards/requirements and across NSIs.

v. *Gender Statistics*

- 7 gender related activities in current project phase, 135 participants, 99 women
- Focus shifted to SES and GE; violence and victimisation related objectives do not appear to have been explored further (one workshop early 2014 only)
- Contributed to gender mainstreaming/reporting in other surveys (census, employments)
- Trainings considered effective by beneficiaries but not all outputs have been taken on-board by NSIs due to limited domestic and EU demand; as well as limited resources (i.e. GE Index only produced in SORs, Macedonia progressing towards objective)

Relevance of Outputs:

Output moderately relevant for participants, Violence at work was discontinued; most countries have made steps towards publication of Gender Statistics, Women and Men booklet.

Overall assessment regarding Q.2.1 and Q.2.2 The project has been effective in some areas only; some outputs have been produced and some of the outcomes have been reached. The overall effectiveness has therefore been moderate.

Q.2.3. Have project activities supported the development of the NSI's in a complementary and positive way? Was there a regional added-value?

Q.2.4. Have project activities positively complemented other development partners' activities, particularly with the EU IPA Multi-Beneficiary Programme, in the participating countries?

- Interventions have all contributed positively to individual development across all components
- Regional added value reiterated by all beneficiaries linked with opportunity to share challenges and solutions in often similar contexts; establishment of professional and personal relationships enabling follow-up with colleagues during and after regional workshops
- Contributions towards institutional effectiveness less straightforward and varying across countries. No explicit procedures for in-house transfer of know-how evidenced.
 - In Environment activities have positively contributed but not yet sufficient to show for sustainable results; linked with Eurostat requirements and have paved the way for more targeted interventions by the latter. Interventions linked well with national projects in AL, KS, SER where more targeted assistance is offered.
 - Survey methodology and summer school as crosscutting components link well with other partner contributions and provide opportunities for larger number of NSI experts to be trained/ exchange of experience over vast array of topics.
 - Regional added value evidenced in Gender statistics/GE index through study visit for SORS GE Index publication; GEI seminars; but no direct linkage with EU.

Project activities are generally considered to support the development of the NSI's in particular the survey methodology and special programmes that are implemented outside the set topics. The weakness is the lack of a clear theory of change for transfer of knowledge in-house to exploit a multiplying effect from seminar, especially the summer school.

Evidence of positively have complemented other programmes is very weak especially towards the IPA MB. Gender and environment has as little in common IPA MB.

Q.2.5. How much has the SCB specialists contributed in the different activities to achieve the project objectives?

- SCB contribution to activities considered essential by beneficiaries. Project focus on technical capacity building; quality of SCB experts perceived as high.
- In particular the design of capacity building activities (mix of theoretical and practical work) was considered highly effective.
- Exchange of experience between the region and peer-to-peer consultation was a key ingredient of the project. Nevertheless SCB expert involvement considered as important added value.
- Role of SCB project office was also appreciated in terms of releasing NSIs of burden of coordination and administration
- However activities were postponed and/or not undertaken due to limited availability of SCB staff. In particular in new areas introduced in the agenda by RSC.
- 51 different SCB experts appear to have been engaged, local experts in 5 activities, and 5 experts from other organizations (EIGE, Eurostat, Met office,

UNESCO, and UKA). 35 activities up to 2016-Q3. 46 experts were used only one time, 12 were used twice. Regional experience not possible to assess, but can be questioned.

4.4.3 Impact

Given that SCB's regional cooperation in statistics has a long history, is it possibly to say something about impact with respect to:

Q.3.1. Are the planned and unplanned long-term effects of the programme on society – i.e. data users and beneficiaries – as a whole, positive or negative

- The programme has had very positive effects in the area of statistical methodology. It has contributed to the development of a group of core statisticians in each NSI who are well trained and knowledgeable. Relative value of statistical methodology course has decreased over the years but it is considered as having been essential in the first years of the regional project.
- The Summer School also has produced positive effects in enabling knowledge exchange and transfer between different NSIs and senior and junior staff; also enhanced staff analytical and research capacities possibly leading to more interest in the future to sustain similar efforts.
- Overall, project has achieved long-lasting impact in terms of introducing/raising awareness on untapped territory i.e. Gender and social statistics (although non core statistics); as well as environment statistics (which has grown into a core area to be further developed through among other Eurostat support).

4.4.4 Sustainability

Q.4.1. Are the programme outcomes and activities likely to continue after the programme has finished?

Q.4.2. Are the NSI's able to continue to develop its organisation and activities in the various components?

Q.4.3. To what extent has the participating NSI's taken an active role in the implementation of the project? To what degree?

Questions about sustainability concern two related aspects: capacity and staffing, on one hand, and allocated financial resources, on the other hand.

- Prospects for sustainability of results are good for the majority of components due to i) high degree of relevance with national and EU accession priorities at project design stage; b) perceived good quality of assistance provided and competence developed.
 - Sound competence has been developed through the statistical methodology course over the years; mainly among young statisticians in the recent years. Summer schools have provided excellent venues to test knowledge and exchange ideas among professionals

- In the area of environment, all NSIs are progressing towards regular production of statistics and have plans to introduce these in the official statistics programmes
- In the area of gender, awareness has been raised among NSIs on importance of gender statistics. However resources are limited and there is no statutory requirement to produce statistics such as GPG. Nevertheless, competence has been developed and gender breakdown in core statistics introduced were missing leading to at least some encouraging prospects for sustainability.
- Overall, sustainability of project results will depend on the ability of NSIs to retain staff. The project has focused primarily on individual competence development and no formal procedures have been evidenced to ensure exchange of knowledge in-house. Furthermore, there has been no use of Training of Trainers techniques to ensure that competence is transferred further.
- Sustainability of RSC is questionable in the medium term in the absence of external support. In this project stage there has been no engagement with top-level management on the capacity and willingness to support RSC and regional activities in the future (both financially and through human resources). RSC ownership over project results has improved; but their engagement in management remains limited.
- The role of the NSIs in actively participate in the implementation is probably also a result of how the project is managed. There has been no indication where the RSC/BPO active seek to have a NSI to organise training. This has happened in the past but is not systematic. The co-hosting of the Summer School is one example engagement runs high. This is an area that can improve.

4.4.5 Organizational learning.

Q5.1. Describe and assess the capacity development 'model' underlying the project implementation logic?

Q.5.2. What lessons could be learned for the current and future programmes?

- The *capacity development model* underlying the project implementation logic is fundamentally based on what may be called “indirect” transfer of knowledge: participation to workshops by the beneficiary, together with study visits and some hands-on (albeit limited) technical assistance given by experts from SCB on the ground. Capacity development targeted towards building institutional capacity through transfer of knowledge to individuals would need a thorough theory of change to ensure that the capacity building takes place inside the organisation.
- The model of “workshops plus study visits plus activities on demand” may work when there is a potential already developed and an emergent need. If coordination and the matching of availability of experts and the recipients are not guaranteed, it may fail to deliver and lead to the desired results. In our case, it appears that SCB has been diligent enough to bring in expertise from the outside when it was not available inside or was not part of SCB core competence. There appear to be areas where more specific technical assistance would be needed and a further project phase would certainly be of help. However, it also appears that there are areas and

specific issues for which the capacity development model that has been applied in this case is not fit. Either because the issues at hand would require specific, advanced technical assistance – not available on demand – or because the effectiveness of training and the building of capacity would require almost a “beginning from scratch” (and would take too long). Workshops or study visits can only contribute to a knowledge transfer limited in scope and not effective in cases where a more “hands-on” and specific, systematic and in-depth assistance would be needed.

- The lesson learned for this project is that interventions such as the Summer school depends highly on the input from the individual participant and the collective knowledge that is being built during the presentations and discussions results in increased knowledge and capacity of that individual. In no place did we find that there was a theory of change how to integrate this knowledge by making use of all of the presentations when returning back to the organisation. There is an enormous potential for a multiplying effect in building institutional capacity not only in the summer school concept but also from all the other workshops and seminars.
- Another lessons learned is the importance of monitoring the project to find out what works and what does not work. There are new instruments in place such as the post activity evaluation being done by INSTAT, and the annual questionnaires being sent out to the NSI's. Properly analyzed together with continuous monitoring of output indicators with targets and milestones can help improve the performance of the project. Having a large amount of the budget left over by the end of the project indicates either on low performance in organizing workshops and seminars or very high cost efficiency, or overestimating the budget in the design phase. But proper monitoring could have detected this at an early stage and take advantage.

a) For the current project:

Q5.3. Which aspects or streams of activities could be adjusted or dropped?

Q5.4. Should new components be considered and if so can the project remain within its stated overall objectives?

- With the project coming to an end very soon any changes to the current project may not be the best strategy but reviewing the project gives at hand the following. The five pillars of the regional project is probably still fit to maintain and if any adjustment should take place it would be within the survey methodology programme where the general basic course could give way to more specialized surveys and techniques. More emphasis to build local capacity in providing the basic training by introducing special training of trainers and learn from the INSTAT training centre project.
- The “emission to air” experience in the environment component shows how important it is to listen to the beneficiaries to learn what their needs are and the

past phase shows that there are indeed other areas that could be included in the training such as ICT, SDG, Quality management in statistics as well as overall management, top level management seminars. Inclusion of new topics like this does not seriously affect the overall objectives since it would contribute towards stronger and better institutions.

b) For a future programme:

Q5.5. Should a future programme focussing on different issues be considered by Sida if a new Regional Strategy gives room for it?

Q5.6. Is it recommended that Sida should fund a next and final project period 2017-2020?

Q5.7. If Sida will fund a next project phase 2017-2020, what could be the management set-up and content of the project?

Q5.8. How should it be organised, in order to be sustainable?

Q5.9. Can and should SCB continue as a long-term partner to NSI's in this respect?

- Key ingredient and value added was regional exchange of experience leading to knowledge share on fine methodological details which often remain unanswered in an audience of far more developed countries/experts.
- It is recommended that SIDA finance a final project period up to 2020. Despite other opportunities for regional cooperation in the framework of Eurostat, the focus this project has on cooperation and relationship building is a unique value.
- Nevertheless, despite excellent cooperation and “fraternisation” in the framework of the project, an external facilitator is an added value from the technical point of view. A technical facilitator is more easily accepted when coming from a peer institution such as SCB or regional statistics offices.
- Programmatic focus:
 - The gender component is highly valued by the NSIs but instruments and methodologies introduced are not viable given the very limited resources. It would likely be discontinued in the absence of outside support. It may be expanded beyond gender to include social statistics in general, i.e. linked with Sustainable Development Indicators under the UN framework.
 - Continuous support is likely to be needed in the medium term in the area of environment statistics.
 - The survey methodology component could be revisited. It is not efficient to continue to provide training to young recruits indefinitely; NSIs could start establishing in-house training capacity and/or fund training in specialised institutions. However, methodology courses linked with specialised survey

- instruments may be organised (thematic courses/targeting the direct experts dealing with the issues).
- Metadata appears to be the next challenge in all NSIs. It appears the component was dropped from the previous project stage because many agencies were involved and it was difficult to maintain a uniform approach. It would be worth considering at the technical level if any added value could be provided through SIDA regional project.
 - In a similar fashion, use of registries remains a challenge across all NSIs and could be a good entry point given Sweden's extensive use of registries for statistics.
 - The workshops on ICT surveys may indicate a potential interest in a future programme.
 - Management set-up:
 - Focus on strengthening the RSC and engagement with top-level management to define strategy
 - Continuation of the project office but focus on coordination of activities at the regional level
 - Coordination function with SCB could be relocated to Sweden/no permanent Swedish expert in region.
 - Development of a clear strategy for devolving decision making authority to RSC – including financial decisions, without which it is difficult to decide on trade-offs.
 - Develop an exit strategy to prepare for phasing out the project office or funding the project office by other means. The exit strategy should also take into consideration the phasing out of Sida support.
 - Development of a cost-sharing model with increasing contribution from NSIs over the years.

Q.5.10. What were the main risks and what efforts have been made to minimize the effect of unforeseen risks that have arisen during implementation?

- The main risk that was identified in the Project Plan was interference of political nature due to changes in top-management in the statistical offices. There is not much one can do about that and with all the different changes that have taken place in almost all the institutes the risk for adverse effects is minimal.
- A more difficult risks the project experience are delays in implementation due to various reasons, most notably is the limited availability of SCB experts resulting

from the complexity of the assignment.³⁴ The regional project need to be managed in a more client focused way rather than a “provider focus”. If experts are not available from SCB then the BPO could possibly source them from the open market. The more regional and local consultants that can be used the better adaptation to the local conditions.

- Future risks for the sustainability and effectiveness of the RP is the capacity of the RSC and the commitment by top management to be willing to allocate resources, both staff and financial.

³⁴ This mainly occur for planning of the “ad hoc” activities, but also the “pre-planned” activities have experienced occasional postponements, e.g. survey methodology.

5 Conclusions and reflections

The overall objective of the regional project is “*developed statistical systems in the region supported by sound statistical methods and practises in line with EU standards*”. The approach taken for this is providing workshops, seminars, study tours and a summer school where the professionals learn to prepare a paper, present it and are able to defend it. The objectives of the project are more comprehensible in light of the activities than the overall objective which could seem a bit presumptuous and difficult to operationalize. In short the project objectives are to develop professional networks in the region, develop environmental statistics indicators, train staff to perform surveys according to EU standards, contribute to harmonized statistical methodologies in line with EU requirements, and contribute to production and dissemination of gender segregated statistics. This is also what the project does in the larger context.

The project is not a traditional project because there are no fixed final objectives to accomplish which would signal the end of the need for support. Instead, it is designed as an on-going programme of support which is intended to go on year after year and provide training to a specific group of professionals. One of the issues with the design of this programme is that it is trying to monitor and measure its performance in relation to outcomes in organisations it cannot control. Whatever outcome in the statistical institutes, that form their customer base, is a result of many processes. The output of the project is transfer of competence and as discussed above the linkage to the outcomes in terms of institutional capacity building are not clear. The main focus is to have a qualitative output that is in demand and being delivered with the expected quality and content. A monitoring system needs to be established to help everyone stay focused on desired outcomes where aggregated data makes it possible to analyze impact over time.

The project objective “develop professional networks” is the first thing being mentioned when asking for the benefit of the programme, i.e. being able to meet and learn from colleagues from other institutes. The next important attribute or benefit of the programme is its flexibility – being able to adapt to the requirements and need of the institutions. Thirdly, the provision of high quality statistical methods training programmes with highly qualified experts fills a gap in a context where this is not readily available in the region.

The management model is also rather unique, a committee that consist of one representative from each participating institution under the leadership of a peer organisation that controls the funding. The aim of making this committee sustainable with higher degree of autonomy is a worthwhile outcome, but it appears that the

purpose for this is not entirely clear and no specific intervention has been included in the programme with this specific goal.

The programme is highly relevant, it meets the requirement of the donor, it meets the requirements from the statistical institutes which is ensured by the governance structure, and strives to provide services to enable the countries to meet the EU requirements for membership. The effectiveness of the programme lies in it being able to provide experts with the required expertise and that it's designed to meet the challenges of environmental statistics, gender statistics, and ensure the availability of statisticians with competence in survey methodologies. The impact of the programme is also attested in the discussions and interviews. It has had a very positive impact in the area of statistical methodology; it has contributed to the development of a core group of competent statisticians across the entire region of Western Balkans. The summer school has produced senior and junior staff that has enhanced their analytical and research capabilities and not the least it has introduced gender statistics and environmental statistics which, according to many interviewees, would not have been introduced otherwise.

The key weakness that the evaluation identifies is the sustainability of the programme's results. The first question to discuss is whether it is demand driven or a supply driven? The answer is probably that it is both. It is supply driven because the donor has a vested interest in promoting environment and gender and it is demand driven because the NSIs have an input through the committee. Would the institutes send their people, 618 people for the past 42 months, if it was not for free? Considering that all the institutes are short-handed and in need of more human resources and yet send people to the training, they probably would if they had the money. Is the programme being run efficiently? Having a lot of unspent funds close to the end of the project could be sign of this, but it could also be a sign of poor performance or a combination of both.

We have touched upon some of the planning and management weaknesses in this programme and one surprising aspect is that when the evaluation team started to look into the design of the programme there was no activity plan in the Project Plan, no target on how many training sessions, how many days of training, or how many participants to train. Some of the basic output indicators were not defined. Later on activity plans were setup and decided by the RSC, which usually was done before the beginning of each year. But the lack of operational targets and the urge to maintain flexibility in the plan may have contributed to the rather informal management and planning approaches. Lastly, we would also like to point out again that the lack of capacity building of the steering committee, the Regional Statistics Committee, has contributed to the current state of low sustainability of the programme. With a stronger and capacitated team in the committee and an exit strategy the transition, when the project office will close, would be more realistic than it is today.

6 Recommendations

The regional cooperation project is soon ending its fourth phase and has been running for the last 14 years, which is a long time. There will be discussions whether there will be a new phase, how it should be designed, and how it should be managed. Having said that, the following recommendations may contribute to the benefit of future interventions. These interventions should be focused on enhancing sustainability, in line with Sida's result strategies in statistics in the region. Therefore,

1. We recommend that Sida funds another phase of the Regional Statistics Cooperation.
2. We recommend that a Balkan Regional Office is kept operational to coordinate and to facilitate the implementation of an exit strategy. The objectives, the institutional set-up as well as its geographical location need to be discussed with the stakeholders. The evaluators consider that closing the BPO prematurely will have an initial negative effect on enabling the RSC to manage the next phase. The transition of coordination and implementation of activities will likely have to take place gradually.
3. An exit strategy should be a major component in the design of the final phase. This exit strategy needs to be discussed among all the stakeholders in the programme; Sida, RSC, and the top management of the NSIs. Sida need to make a decision whether to entrust this to SCB or tender the assignment.
4. A capacity development plan of the RSC should be designed as part of the Project Plan to be implemented and should include strategic and operational documents designed to govern the management of the regional cooperation in the long as well as short term.
5. More precise identification of priorities and areas of intervention, which would ensure better delivery as well as availability of statistics in targeted areas, are required. Implementing planning seminars similar to the PGSC at Eurostat might address this need.
6. In addition to workshops and study tours, methods such as training lectures, training on the job, coaching and mentoring on specific technical issues would also ensure greater effectiveness and should be considered.
7. A more precise monitoring framework, with detailed list of activities, progress and target indicators, milestones, which would ensure better project management.

There is also a need to link the implemented activities with the planned to measure the progress and elaborate on a theory of change to conceptualize how to achieve the outcomes.

8. The systematic tracking of activities with accurate annual planning and monitoring should be prioritised during implementation. Continuous aggregation of data and a database of statistics will enable trend analysis, comparative analysis and system level impact over time.
9. A more accurate budgeting by activity and type of intervention, which would ensure better project effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. Cost monitoring should be developed to monitor the project continuously at least on the component level to ensure timely decision-making and monitoring of staying on track.

Annex 1 – Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference for the evaluation of The Regional Statistics Cooperation on the Western Balkans 2013-2016 and Partnership in Statistics: A cooperation project between Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (SORS) and Statistics Sweden (SCB)

Date: 2016-06-23

Case number: 16/000601

1. Background

1.1 Regional cooperation

Sida has since late 2002 supported regional statistics cooperation in the Western Balkans, with Statistics Sweden (SCB) as the responsible authority for the implementation. SCB opened a regional office in Belgrade 2003 in order to facilitate the handling of the regional project as well as the bilateral projects in the region. Presently, Sida supports bilateral projects with SCB as institutional partner in Albania, Kosovo and Serbia. The partner to SCB in the region project is a non-formal Regional Statistics Committee, where each participating national statistics institute has one seat and SCB also holds one seat. The chairperson of the committee is rotating among the Western Balkans representatives from Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. The project is aimed for competence development focused on five components: the Regional Statistics Committee, statistics methodology, the statistics summer school, environmental statistics and gender statistics. The overall objective is ‘developed statistical systems in the region supported by sound statistical methods and practices in line with EU standards’. The present phase of the regional project is based on the project document Regional cooperation project in the South Eastern Europe, project plan for the period 2013-2016, 26 November 2012, slightly revised in the Inception report 2013-2016 Draft 3, 15 May 2013, with a total budget of SEK 27 583 000.

The only other regional development cooperation programme in statistics is the Eurostat EU/IPA-funded programme. Regarding bilateral programmes, Eurostat is by far the biggest donor, with substantial programmes in all the six Western Balkans countries involved in the Sida-funded regional programme. Other donors include the IMF, UNICEF and World Bank.

Sida has decided to carry out an independent evaluation of the regional statistics project in 2016 in order to get deeper information on the results of the project and to get advice on a possible next phase of the project for the period 2017-2020.

1.2 Bilateral statistics cooperation Serbia-Sweden

“Partnership in statistics” project started back in 2004 as cooperation between Statistics Sweden (SCB) and local statistical institutes. At that time support provided by Sweden worked on capacity building of the following statistical institutes: Statistical Office of Serbia and Montenegro (SOSM), Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (SORS) and Statistical Office of Montenegro (MONSTAT). After the finalization of the first phase (in 2008) and the phase out of Sweden’s bilateral support to Montenegro, cooperation was continued only with SORS.

During the first two phases of bilateral cooperation, the type of support provided by SCB was dominantly in the area of ‘general capacity building’ of SORS: improvement of IT and even English language skills and rather basic statistical tools, such as Statistical Business Register. SORS’ improved capacity brought cooperation and partnership to a higher level. This was reflected in a stronger ownership of SORS and cooperation that is more demand-driven and leads to assisting SORS in conducting and analysing rather complex statistical surveys such as the Child Confidence Index or Time Use Survey (TUS).

Current project is the fourth phase of “Partnership in Statistics” between SORS and SCB. It was approved in November 2012 and was initially planned to be implemented from December 1, 2012 until November 30, 2015 (activity period). In July 2014, upon a request presented by SCB and SORS, Sida decided to approve a 12 months no-cost extension for the project – new finalization date is November 30, 2016. Total budget for the contribution amounts 13 999 000 SEK divided into two components: 1) SCB component – covering technical assistance provided by Statistics Sweden, amounting 9 484 000 SEK and 2) SORS component – covering cost of statistical surveys implemented by SORS and amounting 4 515 000 SEK. For the two components, Sida has signed cooperation agreements with SCB and SORS (respectively).

The project document that was developed by SCB and SORS proposed the new phase of cooperation to focus on the same thematic areas as the previous three-year project: environmental statistics, economic statistics, social and gender statistics, statistical methodology and general management and quality. The overall objective of the project is to contribute to the development of a sustainable statistical system in Serbia that facilitates decision-making based on relevant and reliable statistical information that meets domestic demands, supports monitoring of the Poverty Reduction Strategy process and complies with the EU integration agenda. The project is organized around the following components and specific objectives linked to them:

1. Environmental statistics and accounts: Implementation of environmental statistics and accounts from programme of official statistics for 2011-2015.
2. Economic statistics - price statistics; Business tendency and consumer surveys: Improvement of Price statistics, Service Price Index, input Price Index for Agriculture and Energy prices; Obtaining qualitative information on current

business situation and forecast short-term development in business operations for economic agents.

3. Social statistics – time use statistics: Access to information on time distribution for the population, taking into account the gender aspects and differences between regional, urban and rural settlements.
4. Statistical methodology: Development of survey methodology and its application in statistical surveys in order to keep them in line with Eurostat standards.
5. General management and quality: Improvement quality of statistical production in line with chapter 5.2 of official 5-years programme and strategy of SORS.

Sida's appraisal of the proposal concluded that the project was designed to build on the results of the previous phase and increased capacities of SORS. It was assessed that SORS was rather well functioning institution implementing number of surveys that are completely in line with the EU standards. The assessment also identified a need for further development and capacity building but also drew attention to SORS' limited absorption capacities due to heavy workload and engagement in other donor funded projects: IPA national and regional and Sweden funded regional project. This risk has unfortunately materialized - limited absorption capacities of SORS have during the first two years of project implementation caused delays that called for extension of the contribution (12 months no cost extension).

The last progress report submitted to Sida in December 2015 concludes that 2015 was 'a turbulent year for SORS' which ended up in a fewer activities implemented than originally planned. The report stated that targets in the areas of environmental economic accounts have been reached, as well as some in the area of statistical methodology.

2. Evaluation Purpose and Objective

2.1 Regional cooperation

The first overall objective of the evaluation is to find out which results the project has been delivering during the period from February 2008 to the end of 2015 in relation to the foreseen objectives in the project documents 2008-2012 and 2013-2016, but also discuss within a broader framework how the project have supported the overall official statistics development in the participating countries and in relation to their desired EU approximation. The main focus shall be on the second phase, 2013-2016.

The second overall objective is to give advice on how to design a possible next and final project period of Sida support to regional statistics cooperation on the Western Balkans for the period 2017-2020, on the basis of sustainable results and continued EU approximation within the framework of the Results strategy for Sweden's reform cooperation with Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and Turkey 2014-2020.

2.2 Bilateral cooperation Serbia-Sweden

Purpose of the review is to safeguard the use of Swedish Government funding and an efficient implementation of the project. The Assignment is expected to assess progress towards projected outputs and outcomes and probability of reaching sustainable results once the project is finalized.

The review has following main objectives:

- Provide an in-depth assessment of the project results, its projected outputs and outcomes.
- Analyse relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. Special emphasis shall be put on project's relevance for Serbia's EU accession and the ongoing negotiations process.
- Assess sustainability of outputs and outcomes reached so far.
- Assess the implementation model applied in the project so far; evaluate expert support and project management provided by SCB (SCB HQ and the Regional office in Belgrade). Special emphases shall be put on the following aspect: effectiveness and efficiency of the current implementation model.
- As the cooperation between SCB and SORS is an institutional capacity development project between two statistical institutes; assess the model(s) used for capacity development.

Based on the assessment of project achievements, appraisal of SORS' capacities and assessment of needs that will arise from and during the EU negotiation process, give recommendations to Sida regarding possible continuation of support to statistics in Serbia.

3. Scope and Delimitations

3.1 Regional cooperation

The evaluation shall inform about the contribution from the Sida funded regional statistics project during the period 2008-2015 to each of the national statistics institutes in the six participating countries on the Western Balkans as well as about effects on the regional cooperation in official statistics.

3.2 Bilateral cooperation Serbia-Sweden

The review mission shall collect and analyse reports and documents with the main focus on project documentation and reports produced by SORS and SCB. The consultant is expected to visit Belgrade to discuss the project with the representatives of the SORS, the SCB Regional Office and Embassy of Sweden. Interviews shall also take place with relevant staff and management at SCB in Stockholm. Meetings and interviews shall cover other stakeholders such as other donors and international organizations (EU and possibly UN), users of statistics in Serbia such as Serbian organizations and institutions (e.g. Tax Office).

4. Organisation, Management and Stakeholders

4.1 Regional cooperation

The evaluation team will meet with Sida in Stockholm, with SCB in Stockholm and Belgrade, with the Regional Statistics Committee in its autumn meeting in 2016. The team will also meet with most of the national statistics institutes in the six participating countries. Before the visits to the countries, coordination and planning with the respective representative in the Regional Statistics Committee shall be carried out.

The team will further meet with Eurostat in Luxemburg.

The draft evaluation report for the regional project will be sent to Sida and SCB in Stockholm and Belgrade for comments. SCB will forward to the Regional Statistics Committee for their comments.

The evaluation consultant company will apply its normal quality assurance for evaluation assignments.

4.2 Bilateral cooperation Serbia-Sweden

The evaluation team will meet with the Swedish Embassy in Belgrade, with SCB in Stockholm and Belgrade and with the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (SORS).

The draft evaluation report for the bilateral project Serbia-Sweden will be sent to the Swedish Embassy in Belgrade, to SCB in Stockholm and to SORS for their comments.

5. Evaluation Questions and Criteria

5.1 Regional cooperation

Describe to which degree the overall objective of the project has been achieved?

Describe if and how the other objectives of the project have been achieved?

Describe if and how the project activities have supported the development of the NSIs in a complementary and positive way?

Describe if and how the project activities have positively complemented other development partners' activities, and especially the Eurostat as the main donor, in the statistical area in the participating countries?

Describe if and how the participating National Statistics Institutes have taken an active role in the implementation of the project?

Describe if and how the SCB specialists have contributed in the different activities to achieve the project objectives?

Describe and assess the capacity development model(s) for the project.

Describe the main risks and what efforts have been made to minimize the effect of unforeseen risks that have arisen during implementation?

What are the main lessons learned from this contribution as a Sida funded regional project in Western Balkans?

Is it recommended that Sida should fund a next and final project period 2017-2020?

If Sida will fund a final project phase 2017-2020, what could be the management set-up and content of the project? And how should it be organised, in order to be sustainable?

5.2 Bilateral cooperation Serbia-Sweden

The information gathered and analysed shall cover:

- Assessment of relevance of the project vis-à-vis the needs and priorities of statistics in Serbia, with the main focus on EU integrations.
- A description of achievements as compared to overall and annual targets.
- An assessment of the capacity development model(s) used for transfer of knowledge and development of competence within SORS.
- Efficiency and cost effectiveness – are there more cost effective methods of achieving the same results? Could the same results be produced with smaller amounts of inputs/resources or could the same input/resources produce a larger output?
- The sustainability of project outputs and outcomes, both from an organizational and financial perspective.
- Assessment of the programme management model³⁵ with emphasis on its effectiveness and efficiency.
- The degree to which extent the project has taken into consideration possible external and internal risks. What efforts have been made to minimize the effect of unforeseen risks that have arisen during implementation?

³⁵ Normally SCB has a long-term Advisor/Expert placed at the National Statistical Institute (NSI) for working closely together with NSI management in implementing the project. In the Serbia/SORS case the management model of the project cooperation has been different.

6. Conclusions, Recommendation and Lessons Learned

The evaluation shall give conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned mainly related to the overall objectives of the evaluation, stated in chapter two of these ToR.

7. Approach and Methodology

The evaluation shall conform to OECD/DAC's quality standards. The approach and method of the evaluation will be proposed by the evaluation consultant in the inception report and discussed with Sida and the Swedish Embassy in Belgrade in an early stage of the evaluation period.

8. Time Schedule

The evaluation is supposed to start around August/September 2016 and continue to October 2016. A draft inception report covering both projects to be evaluated is expected to be delivered to Sida and the Swedish Embassy in Belgrade towards the mid of September, including a specific work plan and timing for the activities to be included. The field work is expected to be carried out in the period September, and will include a meeting with the Regional Statistics Committee in September 2016. The draft report for the regional project will be delivered to Sida and SCB latest 30th of September 2016 and the final report, after receiving comments on the draft report, the 15th of October 2016.

The draft report for the bilateral project Serbia-Sweden will be delivered to the Swedish Embassy, SCB and SORS latest 30th of September and the final report, after receiving comments on the draft report, the 15th of October 2016.

The time plan can be subject for negotiation and agreed upon in writing.

9. Reporting and Communication

All reporting will be in the English language. The terminology of the OECD/DAC Glossary on Evaluation and Results-Based Management should be adhered to. The methodology used must be described and explained in the final report. All limitations shall be made explicit in the reports and the consequences of these limitations shall be discussed.

A draft inception report covering both projects to be evaluated will be presented to Sida and the Swedish Embassy in Serbia in August 2016, including a work plan with a time schedule. A meeting with Sida and the Swedish Embassy in Belgrade to discuss the inception report will be held.

A draft final report for the regional project will be presented to Sida and SCB latest the 30th of September 2016 and a workshop with Sida and SCB will be organised shortly thereafter. If possible, a workshop with the Regional Statistics Committee will be held in October 2016. After receiving written comments, the final report will be presented to Sida latest the 15th of October 2016.

A draft final report for the bilateral project Serbia-Sweden will be presented to the Swedish Embassy in Serbia, SCB and SORS latest the 30th of September 2016.

After receiving written comments, the final report will be presented to the Swedish Embassy in Belgrade latest 15th of October 2016.

10. Resources

The evaluation is not expected to exceed 18 working weeks and the total cost should be limited to SEK 900 000.

11. Evaluation Team Qualification

Sida estimate the assignment to be carried out by three (3) consultants.

One member of the team must have 5 years continuous documented international experience of carrying out evaluations in the public sector.

The team must have 5 years of international documented experience of development of national statistical institutions (NSI's), preferably with experience from Eastern Europe/Western Balkans and EU approximation process.

One member of the team must have documented statistical experience from the Western Balkans.

One member of the team must have 5 years documented knowledge about Swedish government agencies and their role in the Swedish international development cooperation (its structure and content).

All members shall be professionally fluent in the English language, both written and spoken, have an adequate academic background and must be independent of the evaluated activities and have no stake in the outcome of the evaluation.

12. References

Project documents, annual reports, final report for the regional project 2008-2012 etc, EU Progress Report for the countries in the Western Balkans.

For the bilateral project in Serbia: project document, annual progress reports and the EU Progress Report for Serbia for 2015.

Annex 2 – List of documents

Balkan Project Office

Standing Order for the Balkan Project Office, Statistics Sweden, 2015
Strategy for Statistics Sweden's Sida-financed work in the Balkans during the period 2008-2011, Statistics Sweden
Terms of reference Long Term Consultant statistical capacity building Regional Project Western Balkans, 2012
Terms of Reference National Project Coordinator of the Balkan Project Office, 2013

Strategic Documents

Eurostat Regional Yearbook 2016, Eurostat
Results of the 2016 donor coordination survey, EU Commission/Eurostat, July 2016
Results strategy for Sweden's reform cooperation with Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and Turkey 2014 – 2020, Government of Sweden
Strategirapport för Serbien inom ramen för Resultatstrategin för reformsamarbete med Östeuropa, Västra Balkan och Turkiet, SIDA
Strategy for Development Cooperation with Serbia, 2009 – 2012, Government of Sweden
Strategy for Statistical Cooperation with the Enlargement Countries 2014 – 2020, EU Commission/Eurostat, March 2014

Evaluations

Gender equality in thematic priorities, SADEV Report 2010:7
Review of Statistics Sweden's regional Balkan programme, Ramboll Management, June 2007
Swedish Country Cooperation Strategy with Serbia 2009 – 2012 Management and Results, SADEV Evaluation Brief, 2011:2

Project Documents

Activity Plan, Balkan Regional Project, 2013 - 2017
Annual meeting SCB-Sida 23 maj 2013 Final minutes. Balkan Regional Project
Annual meeting SCB-Sida minutes Regional 2014 in SWEDISH draft 4., Balkan Regional Project
Annual meeting SCB-Sida minutes Regional 2015 draft 4 , Balkan Regional Project
Annual meeting SCB-Sida minutes Regional 2016 in SWEDISH draft 2, Balkan Regional Project
Annual Progress Report 2015 draft 1, Regional Cooperation Project in South East Europe, Statistics Sweden
Annual Progress Report Regional Final 2013, Regional Cooperation Project in South

East Europe, Statistics Sweden

Attendance Statistics, Balkan Regional Project 2013 – 2016

Avtalsändring av avtalet Tjänsteköpsöverenskommelse om regionalt statistiksamarbete på Västra Balkan 2013-2016

Component budget follow up 2013-2015, Regional Cooperation Project in South Eastern Europe, Statistics Sweden

Data Collection in the regional project 2008 – 2009, Regional Cooperation in Statistics in the Western Balkans, Statistics Sweden

FINAL CALCULATED COSTS AND BUDGET 2008-2011, Regional Cooperation in Statistics in the Western Balkans, Statistics Sweden

Final report February 2008-December 2012 of the Regional Cooperation in Statistics in the Western Balkans, Statistics Sweden, 2013

Inception Report 2013 – 2016, Regional Cooperation Project in South Eastern Europe, final September 2013

Minutes of RSC meetings 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24

Mission evaluation surveys, Instat, BPO, 2013 - 2015

New Projectbudget- Regional Balkan_no cost extension 2016

Project Plan for the period 2013 – 2016, Regional Cooperation Project in South Eastern Europe, Statistics Sweden, November 2012

Reallocation of Budget for no-cost extension, 2016, Regional Cooperation Project in South Eastern Europe

Request for no cost extension Background Note, Regional Cooperation Project in South Eastern Europe, 2016

Results questionnaires circulated to NSIs by Balkan Project Office 2014, 2015, 2016

Rules of the Regional Statistics Committee Regional Statistics Cooperation during the period February 2008-January 2011

Terms of Reference - Statistics Swedens regional project in Balkan 2008-2011, Statistics Sweden/Sida

Annex 3 – List of interviewees

Name	Position	Organisation	Date of interview
Cecilia Bisgen Jansson	Programme Manager	Sida	September 28, 2016
Thomas Kjellsson	Programme Manager	Sida	September 28, 2016
Pernilla Trädgårdh	Director SCB-ICO	SCB ICO	September 26, 2016
Fredrik Bood	Team Leader	SCB BPO	October 17-21, 2016
Jessica Forsman	Project Coordinator	SCB ICO	September 26, 2016
Dragan Ignatovic	Project Coordinator	SCB BPO	October 17-21, 2016
Jasmina Protec	Project Administrator	SCB BPO	October 17-21, 2016
Snezana Vojcic	Programme Officer	Embassy of Sweden Belgrade	October 21, 2016
Claudia Junker	Head of unit A3 "Statistical cooperation"	Eurostat	November 8, 2016
Ferenc Galik	Statistical Officer, focal point Turkey	Eurostat	November 8, 2016
Slavko Kapuran	Assistant Director for International Relations and EU Integration	SORS	October 18, 2016 October 19, 2016
Mira Nikic	Assistant Director for Development	SORS	October 18, 2016
Olga Melovski Trpinac	Head of Methodology Unit	SORS	October 18, 2016
Marija Karasevic	Unit for sampling methodology		October 18, 2016
Vanja Vojsk	Quality Group	SORS	October 18, 2016
Natasa Cvektovic,	coordinator for quality		October 18, 2016
Tatjana Stanojevic– Miladinovic	Head of Price Department	SORS	October 18, 2016
Dusanka Dostanic	Group for environmental statistics	SORS	October 18, 2016
Ana Vignijevic	Group for environmental statistics	SORS	October 18, 2016
Mirjana Bacilovic	Unit for satellite accounts	SORS	October 18, 2016
Dragana Djokovic Papic	Head at Department for Social Standards and Indicators	SORS	October 18, 2016
Vesna Zajc	Department for Social Standards and Indicators	SORS	October 18, 2016
Vladimir Sutic,	Head of Unit for ICT usage and Business Tendency Surveys	SORS	October 18, 2016
Mirjana Bacilovic	Satellite Accounts Division	SORS	October 18, 2016
Miodrag Cerovina	Statistical Business Register		October 18, 2016
Elsa Dhuli	Director, Economic Statistics	INSTAT, RSC	October 24, 2016
Jasna Samardzic,	Head of International Relations	BHAS, RSC	October 19, 2016
Emina Deliu,	Head Household Budget Survey	KAS, RSC	October 19, 2016
Majda Savicevic	Head Department for International cooperation and European integration	MONSTAT, RSC	October 19, 2016 October 27, 2016
Radmila Cickovic	Director	RSIS	October 24, 2016
Radosav Savanovic	Deputy Director	RSIS	October 24, 2016
Biljana Vuklisevic,	International cooperation	RSIS	October 24, 2016
Biljana Djukic,	Head of Prod. Stat;	RSIS	October 24, 2016
Stana Koprancovic,	Senior stat, Environmental stats	RSIS	October 24, 2016
Darko Marinkovic	Senior stat, Sample and data analysis, Dept for Registers and Sampling	RSIS	October 24, 2016
Lazo Segrt	Dept. Agricultural Statistics	RSIS	October 24, 2016
Vladimi Koprivica	Senior Stat for Labor Statistics	RSIS	October 24, 2016
Edin Sabanovic	Head of Sampling and Survey Unit	BHAS	October 25, 2016
Jasna Isakovic	Sampling and Survey Unit	BHAS	October 25, 2016
Radomir Mutabzija	Industry and construction statistics.	BHAS	October 25, 2016
Nermina Pozderac	Senior advisor for energy statistic	BHAS	October 25, 2016

Mirza Agic	Senior advisor for environmental statistics	BHAS	October 25, 2016
Tamara Supic	Transport, energy, environmental and regional statistics	BHAS	October 25, 2016
Gorana Knezevic,	Head of Society development statistics	BHAS	October 25, 2016
Selma Huskovic Bajramovic	Labour statistics	BHAS	October 25, 2016
Ivan Simic	Labour Force Survey and Labour Cost Survey	BHAS	October 25, 2016
Vedrana Karic	Senior advisor for international cooperation	BHAS	October 25, 2016
Mr Emir Kremic,	Director	FBHIS	October 26, 2016
Galiba Karacic	General Secretary (Deputy Director)	FBHIS	October 26, 2016
Fehrija Mehic	Head, Sector of Agriculture, Fisheries and Environment	FBHIS	October 26, 2016
Damir Omanovic	Agricultural Prices, Environment	FBHIS	October 26, 2016
Mediha Skulic	Gender issues, Survey department	FBHIS	October 26, 2016
Emina Sabanadzovic	Gender issues, Labour department	FBHIS	October 26, 2016
Merima Hadjalic	Trade department	FBHIS	October 26, 2016
Irena Varagic	Independent advisor in Department for demography, education, culture and justice	MONSTAT	October 27, 2016
Jelena Zvizdojevic	Deputy director, Sector of agriculture, fishery, business statistics, environment and forestry	MONSTAT	October 27, 2016
Natasa Vuckovic	Independent advisor in Department for environmental statistics and forestry	MONSTAT	October 27, 2016
Milica Pavlovic	Head of Department for statistical sampling	MONSTAT	October 27, 2016
Dunja Djokic	Independent advisor in Department for labor market statistics	MONSTAT	October 27, 2016
Milena Vukotic	Responsible for Department for living conditions, social services and household consumption	MONSTAT	October 27, 2016
Ivana Tanjevic	Independent advisor in Department for labor market statistics	MONSTAT	October 27, 2016
Boris Muratovic	Advisor in department for business statistics and short term indicators	MONSTAT	October 27, 2016
Mirela Muça,	General Director	INSTAT	October 24, 2016
Merita Jano	Livestock and Environmental statistics);	INSTAT	October 24, 2016
Alban Cela	Director Environment& Agriculture	INSTAT	October 24, 2016
Liljana Boci	Head of methodology sector	INSTAT	October 24, 2016
Olta Kodra	IT Department, Business Registers	INSTAT	October 24, 2016
Vjollca Simoni	International Cooperation and EU relations	INSTAT, RSC	October 19, 2016 October 24, 2016
Birgitta Mannfelt	Long Term Advisor	Statistics Sweden/INSTAT	October 24, 2016
Isa Krasniqi	Executive Chief	KAS	October 25, 2016
Carl Magnus Jaensson	Long Term Advisor	Statistics Sweden/Sida	October 25, 2016
Valbona Ismaili	Project Coordinator	Statistics Sweden/Sida	October 25, 2016
Ilir T. Berisha	Director Economic Department & Business Statistics Unit	KAS	October 25, 2016
Hysni Elshani	Senior officer for retail trade statistics, economic statistics and national accounts	KAS	October 25, 2016
Bajrush Qevani	Director Agriculture Department & Environmental Statistics Unit	KAS	October 25, 2016
Flutura Shosholli	Senior officer for Environmental	KAS	October 25, 2016

	statistics		
Haki Kurti;	Chief of Division for Environment	KAS	October 25, 2016
Burim Limolli	Chief of Division for Information Technology	KAS	October 25, 2016
Bekim Canolli	Chief of Division for Methodology	KAS	October 25, 2016
Besa Haqifi	Senior officer for statistics of Living Standard	KAS	October 25, 2016
Bujar Hajrizi	Head of Labour Market Unit	KAS	October 25, 2016
Emina Deliu	Head of Living Standard Unit	KAS, RSC	October 19, 2016 October 25, 2016
Ibrahim Rustemi	Director of Department for Policy, Planning, Coordination and Communication	KAS	October 25, 2016
Teuta Zyberi,	Officer for External Relations, Policy, Planning,	KAS	October 25, 2016
Muhamet Kastrati,	Application Developer in Economic statistics	KAS	October 25, 2016
Hydai Morina,	Officer for statistics of Living Standard	KAS	October 25, 2016
Selami Zylfiu	Officer for Agriculture statistics	KAS	October 25, 2016
Dejan Stankov	Deputy Director General	SSOMK	October 26, 2016
Mirjana Bosnjak	Head of Sector for business statistics, agricultural statistics and statistics on Environment	SSOMK	October 26, 2016
Aleksandar Eftimov	Department – Director's Office	SSOMK	October 26, 2016
Tatjana Mitevska	Department for international cooperation and European integration	SSOMK, RSC	October 26, 2016
Tatjana Velkova Jovancevska	Department for project cooperation and monitoring	SSOMK	October 26, 2016
Dejan Peeski	Department for statistical and mathematical methods	SSOMK	October 26, 2016
Maja Spasovska	Department for statistical and mathematical methods	SSOMK	October 26, 2016
Bojkica Markovska	Department for population statistics	SSOMK	October 26, 2016
Ivana Naskova,	Department for living standard	SSOMK	October 26, 2016
Tatjana Drangovska	Department for agricultural statistics and environmental statistics	SSOMK	October 26, 2016
Suzana Stojanovska	Department for agricultural statistics and environmental statistics	SSOMK	October 26, 2016

Annex 4 – List of implemented activities and participation

Period	Year	Date	Activity	Component	Consultants	Women	Men
2013Q2	2013	2013-06-03	Regional seminar on environmental statistics, Podgorica, Montenegro, 3-6 June 2013	ENVIRONMENT	Veronica Eklund, Barbro Olsson and Olof Dunsö	7	2
2014Q4	2014	2014-11-10	Regional meeting on environmental statistics, Vienna, Austria, 10-11 November 2014	ENVIRONMENT	Veronica Eklund and Kaisa Ben Daher	9	2
2015Q2	2015	2015-04-21	Regional seminar on Environmental Taxes, Milocer, Montenegro, 21-23 April 2015	ENVIRONMENT	Elin Tornqvist and Sebastian Constantino	8	7
2015Q3	2015	2015-09-01	Regional seminar on environmental statistics (waste from construction and service sector), Becici, Montenegro, 1-3 September 2015	ENVIRONMENT	Malin Johansson and Jonas Allerup	8	8
2015Q4	2015	2015-10-20	Regional seminar on Joint Inland Water Questionnaire I, Tirana, 20-22 October 2015	ENVIRONMENT	Jerker Moström and Karin Hedeklint	9	7
2016Q1	2016	2016-03-21	Regional seminar on Environmental Taxes, Skopje, Macedonia, 21-23 March 2016	ENVIRONMENT	Sebastian Constantino and Frederic Nauroy (from EUROSTAT)	11	7
2016Q2	2016	2016-04-05	Regional seminar on Joint Inland Water Questionnaire II, Bar, Montenegro, 5-7 April 2016	ENVIRONMENT	Jerker Moström, Karin Hedeklint and Asa Johnsen (Met Office)	8	8
2016Q3	2016	2016-09-27	Regional workshop on Material Flow Accounts, Budva, Montenegro, 27-29 September 2016	ENVIRONMENT	Louise Sorme and Marten Berglund	10	8
2016Q4	2016	2016-11-08	Regional seminar on Joint Inland Water Questionnaire III, Skopje, Macedonia, 8-10 November 2016	ENVIRONMENT	Julia Hytteborn and Tove Rosenblom	6	7
				9	Selection	76	56
					Total women	402	
					Total men		216

Period	Year	Date	Activity	Component	Consultants	Women	Men
2013Q2	2013	2013-06-03	Regional seminar on environmental statistics, Podgorica, Montenegro, 3-6 June 2013	ENVIRONMENT	Veronica Eklund, Barbro Olsson and Olof Dunsö	7	2
2014Q4	2014	2014-11-10	Regional meeting on environmental statistics, Vienna, Austria, 10-11 November 2014	ENVIRONMENT	Veronica Eklund and Kaisa Ben Daher	9	2
2015Q2	2015	2015-04-21	Regional seminar on Environmental Taxes, Milocer, Montenegro, 21-23 April 2015	ENVIRONMENT	Elin Tornqvist and Sebastian Constantino	8	7
2015Q3	2015	2015-09-01	Regional seminar on environmental statistics (waste from construction and service sector), Becici, Montenegro, 1-3 September 2015	ENVIRONMENT	Malin Johansson and Jonas Allerup	8	8
2015Q4	2015	2015-10-20	Regional seminar on Joint Inland Water Questionnaire I, Tirana, 20-22 October 2015	ENVIRONMENT	Jerker Moström and Karin Hedeklint	9	7
2016Q1	2016	2016-03-21	Regional seminar on Environmental Taxes, Skopje, Macedonia, 21-23 March 2016	ENVIRONMENT	Sebastian Constantino and Frederic Nauroy (from EUROSTAT)	11	7
2016Q2	2016	2016-04-05	Regional seminar on Joint Inland Water Questionnaire II, Bar, Montenegro, 5-7 April 2016	ENVIRONMENT	Jerker Moström, Karin Hedeklint and Asa Johnsen (Met Office)	8	8
2016Q3	2016	2016-09-27	Regional workshop on Material Flow Accounts, Budva, Montenegro, 27-29 September 2016	ENVIRONMENT	Louise Sorme and Marten Berglund	10	8
2016Q4	2016	2016-11-08	Regional seminar on Joint Inland Water Questionnaire III, Skopje, Macedonia, 8-10 November 2016	ENVIRONMENT	Julia Hytteborn and Tove Rosenblom	6	7
				9	Selection	76	56
					Total women	402	
					Total men		216

Period	Year	Date	Activity	Component	Consultants	Women	Men
2013Q2	2013	2013-04-03	Regional Workshop on non-sampling errors, Becici, Montenegro, 3–5 April 2013	METHODOLOGY	Ann-Marie Flygare and Peter Lundquist	13	8
2014Q4	2014	2014-10-06	Regional Survey Methodology Course, week 1 – week 3 (THREE EVENTS)	METHODOLOGY	Milica Petric, Ann-Marie Flygare, Peter Lundquist and local lecturers	16	7
2015Q1	2015	2015-03-24	Regional course on imputation, Sarajevo, BiH, 24–27 March 2015	METHODOLOGY	Tiina Orusild and Stefan Berg	16	9
2016Q4	2016	2016-10-17	Regional Survey Methodology Course, week 1, Laktasi, BiH, 17–21 October 2016	METHODOLOGY	Peter Lundquist, Thomas Laitila and local lecturer	17	7
2016Q4	2016	2016-11-01	Regional Workshop on Sampling Coordination, Tirana, Albania, 1–3 November 2016	METHODOLOGY	Annika Lindblom and Peter Lundquist	12	9
				5	Selection	74	40
					Total women	402	
					Total men		216

Period	Year	Date	Activity	Component	Consultants	Women	Men
2013Q3	2013	2013-09-02	Summer School	SUMMER SCHOOL	Inger Öhman, Ulf Durnell and Åke Bruhn	13	6
2014Q3	2014	2014-09-01	Summer School	SUMMER SCHOOL	Mats Bergdahl, Heather Bergdahl, Milica Petric	18	5
2015Q3	2015	2015-09-07	Summer School	SUMMER SCHOOL	Thomas Laitila, Klas Blomqvist and local lecturers	13	10
2016Q3	2016	2016-09-05	Summer School	SUMMER SCHOOL	Peter Lundquist, Thomas Laitila and local lecturers	17	9
				4	Selection	61	30
					Total women	402	
					Total men		216

Period	Year	Date	Activity	Component	Consultants	Women	Men
2013Q1	2013	2013-03-20	Metaplus seminar, Becici, Montenegro, 20–22 March 2013	RSC extra	Klas Blomqvist, Veronica Bragden, Kristoffer Holm, Helen Marklund	4	10
2013Q4	2013	2013-11-06	Workshop on the ICT survey, Montenegro, 6–8 November 2013	RSC extra	Daniel Ewerdahl and Ingrid Persson	7	6
2013Q4	2013	2013-12-10	Regional workshop on Educational Statistics - ISCED, Montenegro, 10–12 December 2013	RSC extra	Kenny Petersson and Anna Eriksson (and Alison Kennedy from UNESCO)	18	4
2014Q2	2014	2014-04-24	Study visit on the ICT survey, SORS, Belgrade, 24 – 25 April 2014	RSC extra	local lecturers	8	8
2014Q2	2014	2014-05-21	Workshop on the ICT survey, Montenegro, 21–23 May 2014	RSC extra	Daniel Ewerdahl, Karolina Eriksson, Qun Wang	9	8

2015Q1	2015	2015-03-23	Regional workshop on Educational Statistics – financial data, Albania, 23–25 March 2015	RSC extra	Anna Eriksson, Robert Hansson and Marie Kahlroth (from UKA)	12	9
2015Q4	2015	2015-10-27	Regional workshop on the Use of Registers in Social Statistics, Sarajevo, BiH, 27–29 October 2015	RSC extra	Veronica Andersson, Claus Goran Hjelm and Thomas Laitila	19	4
2015Q4	2015	2015-11-17	Regional seminar on Profiling of Businesses and Treatment of Enterprise Group, Pržno, Montenegro, 17–19 November 2015	RSC extra	Bernt Sjodin and Johanna Jonsson	15	5
				8	Selection	92	54
					Total women	402	
					Total men		216

Annex 5 – Result and monitoring framework

Component 1: Regional Statistics Committee				
Specific objective: Strengthening RSC planning and sustainability				Evaluation Assessment
Component objective: Strengthening regional NSI exchange				
Description	Indicators	Current fulfillment	Target - Milestones	Degree of achievement
Outcome objective <i>Reaching institutional goal</i> Increased independence by the NSIs in the running of the RSC.	Outcome indicator Level of independence	Medium	High	Partially achieved. RSC has developed moderate cohesion but high independence has not been enabled by management setup. No oversight over coordination with SCB and resources allocated.
Outcome objective <i>Institutional effectiveness</i> Improved efficiency of regional sharing and interaction through RSC facilitation.	Outcome indicator No. of decisions put into actions (workshops, missions, etc.)	9 (2) in 2013 11 (4) in 2014 10 (4) in 2015	8 in 2013 8 in 2014 9 in 2015 9 in 2016	Partially achieved. - No of RSC decisions in line with targets - Real authority of RSC still questionable somewhat impaired by project management set-up.
Outcome objective <i>Institutional change</i> Decision and identification making capacity of the RSC developed.	Outcome indicator No. of decisions put into action to related activities	9 (2) in 2013 11 (4) in 2014 10 (4) in 2015	8 in 2013 8 in 2014 9 in 2015 9 in 2016	Partially achieved Identification and coordination capacity built. Materialisation of decisions not always occurs.
Output objective To improve the cooperation model of the RSC through preparations, planning and	Output indicators Structured documentation related to each finalised subcomponent	Un-known	Each component documented and posted on the SCB/BPO website	Not achieved. No evidence of updated website. Quality of documentation and transparency lagging behind.

reporting formats that promote the sharing of information and efficient exchange between NSIs.	Evaluation reports on each action	Evaluations performed regularly after each activity by INSTAT	On each action from 2014 appended to mission reports	Achieved. However systematic tracking system by component by BPO would add value.
	Template for evaluation questionnaire	In place	In place May 2013	Achieved.
Output objective Annual operational planning framework in place detailing activities, expected and real results of the current year	Output indicators Annual operational plan approved by the RSC and communicated with the International Relations Offices in each NSI.	Annual operational plan in place. Evaluation of accomplishment and evaluation of success or failure does not take place.	Feb 2013 Jan 2014 Jan 2015 Jan 2016	Achieved. However operational plan still remains a moving target subject to frequent changes.
	Prioritised list of proposed activities from each NSI 1 month in advance of RSC meeting	Listing of proposed activities presented during meeting.	Proposals in writing if any 1 month in advance of RSC meeting	Evidence insufficient for a definite assessment. Proposals in writing seem to be submitted in advance for some activities.
Output objective Annual progress reports	Output indicator Annual progress report approved by the RSC	Not in place	Annually in second quarter	Achieved.
Output objective Rotation of chairperson	Output indicator Rotation of chairperson	Takes place every year	First RSC meeting every year Once a year	Achieved. However chairmanship does not bear specific significance given limited decisionmaking authority of the RSC (see outcome objectives)

Component 2: Environment statistics					
Specific objective: Strengthening existing and developing new environmental indicators					Evaluation assessment
Component objective: Strengthening regional environmental statistics through sharing and joint development					
Description	Indicators	Baseline	Target - Milestones	Sources of verification	Degree of achievement
Outcome objective <i>Institutional change</i> Use of new/alternative data sources.	Outcome indicator More data on environmental statistics in Eurostat/UN database.	Incomplete data sets available.	Increase in the amount of data submitted by: 5% by 2014; 10% by 2016.	Eurostat/UN publications and annual report	NSIs have increased no of indicators reported and some have introduced survey instruments to complement administrative data. Indicator not easily measurable due to broad scope of component and different baseline in each NSI.
Outcome objective <i>Institutional change</i> New and improved environmental indicators developed in collaboration with SCB and other offices in the region.	Outcome indicator A number of individual new national environmental indicators developed through RSC work	Incomplete indicators available	1 new indicator developed by 2014; 2 new indicators in total developed by 2016.	Annual report	All NSIs have improved existing indicators or produced new indicators to varying degrees of quality/reliability
Outcome objective <i>Institutional effectiveness</i> Improved cooperation with other producers of environmental statistics in national systems	Outcome indicator Data exchange agreements with other national producers of environmental statistics	Cooperation is weak	All NSIs have data exchange mechanisms with other data providers by 2016.	Annual report	All NSIs have cooperation/ data exchange frameworks in place with other public institutions. Improvements recorded where original baseline was low. There is still space for improvement

Output objective Staff working in environmental statistics department trained in areas defined by RSC (IPCC standards, emissions to air and water, environmental expenditures etc.)	Output indicator Number of staff members per NSI trained in environmental expenditure and taxes (EE&T). Number of staff members per NSI trained in the methodology of calculation of emissions to air and water.	Only incomplete training provided so far	6 – 9 staff fully trained in EE&T by 2014; A total of 12 – 18 staff fully trained in EE&T by 2016. 6 – 9 staff fully trained in calculation of emissions to air and water by 2014; A total of 12 – 18 staff fully trained in calculation of emissions to air and water by 2016.	Annual report	Partially achieved. Trainings provided but still insufficient. All key stakeholders report needing considerable further training.
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Component 3: Survey Methodology					
Specific objective: Sharing regional experiences in overcoming continuous survey obstacles					Evaluation Assessment
Component objective: Improved survey methodologies in the NSIs in the region					
Description	Indicators	Baseline	Milestones - Target	Sources of verification	Degree of achievement
Outcome objective <i>Institutional change</i> Shared methods of survey development and solutions	Outcome indicator Perception by relevant staff at each NSI of the level of methods sharing.	Low level	Medium level by 2016.	Staff surveys and annual report on the Results Monitoring Framework.	Achieved to satisfactory levels. Self-assessment of respondents indicates positive results on everyday work, which may be directly attributable to this component.
Outcome objective <i>Institutional effectiveness</i> Improvement of processes in surveys to meet the EU standards	Outcome indicator Level of compliance with EU standards.	Medium level.	High level of compliance for most of the surveys by 2016.	SMIS+ (Eurostat self assessment)	Achieved for some core areas in most institutions according to annual report and stakeholder interviews. Challenges persist in different countries to varying degrees, most due to structural challenges. Achievement as a result of multiple interventions, including Sida regional project
Outcome objective <i>Institutional effectiveness</i> Improved efficiency of work (comparability, timely publication, quality etc.), considering the growing demands for new surveys and at the same time reducing the burden of reporting units.	Outcome indicator Time for data processing (and release).	Not measured.	5% reduction in data processing by 2016.	Annual report	No evidence to substantiate. Difficult to measure. Indicator not fully apt for measuring progress across multiple countries and survey instruments
Outcome objective <i>Institutional effectiveness</i> New survey methodologies introduced nationally through RSC work.	Outcome indicator Frequency of introduction of new survey methodologies.	Rarely introduced.	Introduced more often by 2016.	Staff surveys and annual report	No evidence available to substantiate. Circumstantial evidence indicates small methodological improvements across the board. Difficult to assess to what extent this is attributable to Sida regional project.
Output objective	Output indicator	Too few people trained for the role of trainers for	At least 2 new people trained in the region annually.	Annual report on the Results Monitoring	Not achieved. No proper training of trainers carried out.

Training of local trainers to ensure sustainability of the results.	Number of people trained as trainers.	other staff.	≥ 8 persons in total involved by 2016.	Framework.	Local trainers engaged in some activities but does not appear to be sufficient.
Output objective Regular publication of methodological documents and explanations for survey results	Output indicator Survey results accompanied by reports detailing the methodology used for surveys.	Reports do not appear regularly.	All surveys accompanied by methodological explanations by 2016.	Documents published on NSIs websites and annual report on the Results Monitoring Framework.	No evidence to assess with confidence. It appears that there is no regular pattern of publication of methodologies.
Output objective IT persons in the NSIs from the region trained for implementing new software solutions for data quality	Output indicator Number of people trained.	N/A	one person per NSI trained by 2014; ≥ 2 persons per NSI trained by 2016.	Annual report on the Results Monitoring Framework.	Achieved 25 people trained in imputation techniques. However training was an ad-hoc activity introduced by RSC not in original project plan.
Output objective 2 - 3 persons per NSI trained in survey methodology per training course.	Output indicator Number of people trained.	100 persons trained so far.	30 more persons trained by 2014; 60 more persons in total trained by 2016.	Annual report on the Results Monitoring Framework.	Fully achieved.

Component 4: Summer School					
Specific objective: RSC to identify relevant topics and participants for the Summer School					Evaluation Assessment
Component objective: Developing NSI regional interaction and sharing of methods and solutions					
Description	Indicators	Baseline	Milestones - Target	Sources of verification	Degree of achievement
Outcome objective <i>Reaching institutional goal</i> More efficient national responses to new quality and methods demands through regional interaction and sharing	Outcome indicator Applied new methods/processes	Low level	Medium level	Annual report	Evidence indicates good achievements of this component towards networking and sharing between NSIs. Interaction has grown to be long-lasting over the years sometimes leading to continued professional exchange also outside of project framework. Application of new methods: No clear linkage between outcome objective and indicator as defined in IR. Not possible to assess.
Outcome objective <i>Institutional effectiveness</i> Improvements in statistical production process efficiency	Outcome indicator Application and/or improvement of existing methods and processes	Medium level	High level (all areas)	Annual report	No clear logical sequence in definition of outcome objective and indicators not clearly linked (output – outcome relationship). Impossible to assess.
Outcome objective <i>Institutional effectiveness</i> Independent NSIs Summer School organisation	Outcome indicator Independent NSIs Summer School organisation	50/50 NSI/SCB	55% by 2013 60% by 2014 70% by 2015 80% by 2016	List of work tasks devolved from SCB/SCB/BPO	Partially achieved. NSI actively engaged in logistical arrangements for SS only. No formal delegation of responsibility on SS organisation between SCB/BPO and NSIs.

Outcome objective <i>Institutional effectiveness</i> Improvement of writing and presentation skills in relation to statistical topics	Outcome indicator Improvement of writing and presentation skills in relation to statistical topics	12 percent of all statisticians in Western Balkans trained	13.5% by 2013 15.0% by 2014 16.5% by 2015 18.0% by 2016	Lecturers mission report	Achieved. In course evaluation (2016) 96% of participants indicate improved writing skills and 80% improved presentation skills. No of summer school participants estimated at about 5% of statisticians (1% off target)
Outcome objective <i>Institutional change</i> Shared and updated methodologies and process capacities applied in NSIs	Outcome indicator Improved methodology manuals	Medium	Increasing	Methodology manuals	Not measured due to poor definition of both output – outcome relationship and indicators. Acknowledged in progress report that not possible to measure.
Output objective <i>Individual objective (learning)</i> Inclusion of local lecturers in the Schools to contribute to sustainability and ownership	Output indicator Lecturing by 2 senior staff from the region with SCB consultants	2 persons in 7 years	2 persons per year Target 8 persons	RSC meeting minutes	Partially achieved. Local lecturers have been engaged in some of the summer schools. There is no formal procedure of selecting local lecturers nor Terms of Reference available.
Output objective <i>Institutional objective (production)</i> Better local organisation skills and higher attendance rates	Output indicator At least 1 trained person in organisational issues	8 persons in 7 years	1 person per year Target 4 persons	RSC meeting minutes	NSI organisation skills reported to be very good. SSO withdrew from participation in SS 2015 due to logistical issues. No training or coaching by BPO/SCB appears to have been needed nor provided. Indicator not apt.
Output objective <i>Institutional objective (production)</i> Better presentation and feed-back skills	Output indicator Attendance of 25 participants from the region	160 persons in 7 years	25 persons per year Target 100 persons	Annual report	Target almost achieved – 91 people attended/76 from the target NSIs.

Component 5: Gender					
Specific objective: RSC to identify national stakeholders to improve gender statistics					Evaluation assessment
Component objective: Gender sensitised national statistics products through regional sharing and interaction					
Description	Indicators	Baseline	Milestones - Target	Sources of verification	Degree of achievement
Outcome objective To obtain new indicators in gender statistics in all NSIs in the region	Outcome indicator New indicators in gender statistics included in national, Eurostat/UN databases	Non-existent	At least 10 indicators obtained by mid-2016	National, Eurostat/ UN databases Annual reports	Difficult to assess. Results framework is ambiguous about what indicators it refers to for which there was no baseline in 2016.
Outcome objective To improve existing gender statistics indicators in all NSIs in the region	Outcome indicator Existing indicators in gender statistics improved and included in national, Eurostat/UN databases	Medium level	High level by continuous practice by mid-2016	National, Eurostat/UN databases Annual reports	Not measurable also according to progress reports. Poor indicator definition.
Outcome objective To improve promotion of gender statistics through new/improved reports, publications, press, gender-oriented analyses, etc.	Outcome indicator New/improved reports, publications, press, gender-oriented analyses, etc. published	Medium level	Increased number of publications by mid-2016	NSIs websites Annual reports	All countries have made steps towards improved publication of gender statistics, often through other partner support but Scb assistance has been instrumental. This has moderate correlation with increase in user demand
Outcome objective To widely use gender statistics data by stakeholders in reporting and decision and policy making	Outcome indicator Requests for more gender statistics data to be used by stakeholders in reporting and decision and policy making	Low/Medium level	Increased number of requests by mid-2016	RSC meeting minutes	Partially achieve. RSC indicates interest of NSIs in gender statistics but no consistently increasing demand from data users.
Outcome objective To improve cooperation with stakeholders in exchange of gender statistics data	Outcome indicator Improved cooperation with stakeholders in exchange of gender statistics data	Medium level	Increased number of exchanges by mid-2016	RSC minutes	Partially achieved Slight increase in user demand reported in some but not all NSIs according to annual progress survey. New indicators produced generate have increased interest

Outcome objective To produce gender analysis report on Census data in all NSIs in the region	Outcome indicator Gender analysis report on Census data in all NSIs in the region published	Non-existent	One report produced by each NSI in the region by mid-2016	NSIs websites Annual reports	Achieved in some but not all relevant NSIs (where census was conducted; SORS did not publish separate report but instead focused on GEI)
Output objective To train all NSIs in the region about issues on Violence at Work and how to measure it	Output indicator Number of persons per NSI in the region trained in issues on Violence at Work and how to measure it	Non-existent	12-18 persons (2 to 3 persons per NSI) trained by end of 2014	Annual report on the Results Monitoring Framework	Output achieved: 15 people trained. Result not achieved due to lack of commitment by NSIs (see below)
Output objective To draft the questionnaire and methodology for a pilot survey on Violence at Work	Output indicator Questionnaire and methodology drafted for a pilot survey on Violence at Work	Non-existent	Finalised by mid-2016	Annual report on the Results Monitoring Framework	
Output objective To train all NSIs in the region in Structure of Earnings Survey	Output indicator Number of persons per NSI in the region trained in Structure of Earnings Survey	Low level	12-18 persons (2 to 3 persons per NSI) trained by end of 2014	Annual report on the Results Monitoring Framework	Output achieved. 3 seminars conducted, on average 14 women and 5 men trained in each.
Output objective To draft the questionnaire and methodology for Structure of Earnings Survey exercise	Output indicator Questionnaire and methodology drafted for Structure of Earnings Survey exercise	Non-existent	Finalised by end of 2014	Annual report on the Results Monitoring Framework	Draft pilot questionnaires drafted in BH, AL.
Output objective To conduct Structure of Earnings Survey exercise in all NSIs in the region	Output indicator Structure of Earnings Survey exercise conducted in all NSIs in the region	N/A	1 Structure of Earnings Survey exercise per NSI conducted by mid-2015	Annual report on the Results Monitoring Framework	Partially achieved – SES conducted in Serbia and Monstat only through IPA support Other NSI report limited resources
Output objective To train all NSIs in the region in calculation of Gender Pay Gap based on Structure of Earnings	Output indicator Number of persons per NSI in the region trained in calculation of Gender Pay Gap based on	Low level	12-18 persons (2 to 3 persons per NSI) trained by mid-2016	Annual report on the Results Monitoring Framework	Achieved satisfactorily based on self-assessment.

Survey exercise results	Structure of Earnings Survey exercise results				
Output objective	Output indicator				
To train all NSIs in the region in gender analysis and presentation of population census data	Number of persons per NSI in the region trained in gender analysis and presentation of population census data	Medium level	12-18 persons (2 to 3 persons per NSI) trained by mid-2016	Annual report on the Results Monitoring Framework	Achieved.



Evaluation of the Regional Statistics Cooperation on the Western Balkans 2013 – 2016

The evaluation focused on the OECD/DAC criteria relevance, effectiveness, impact, sustainability and organizational learning. This report presents the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation of the Regional Statistics Cooperation on the Western Balkans 2013-2016 conducted during the period September – November 2016.

The evaluation found that: Activities carried out were by and large relevant and has been moderately effective. The effects of the interventions have been positive, especially considering the Summer School, statistical methodology, gender and social statistics and the prospects for sustainability of results are good for the majority of the components. However, the sustainability of project results will depend on the ability of NSIs to retain staff and the sustainability of the RSC is questionable in the medium term in the absence of external support.

The evaluation briefly examined the effectiveness of the project monitoring and management and there is room for improvements in using standard project planning, monitoring and evaluation approaches.

It's recommended that future interventions should be focused on enhancing sustainability, in line with Sida's result strategies in the region. Therefore, the evaluation among others recommends: Sida funds another phase of the Regional Statistics Cooperation; A Balkan Regional Office is maintained to coordinate and to facilitate the implementation of an exit strategy which should be a major component in the design of the final phase together with a more precise monitoring framework.