Statistics Norway
Statistisk sentralbyrå

Statistics Norway
Division for Development
Cooperation

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Documents

Selected Documents on the Modernisation of the Civil Registration System in Albania

Vol. II

Contents

Preface

This publication is the second from Statistics Norway with documents on the project to assist in the modernisation of the civil status registers in Albania. The purpose is to gather experience and documentation produced by the project, in an easily accessible manner, for remaining work in the project, for the Government of Albania and for the international donor community during future efforts in this comprehensive and important field.

The publication includes reports by the first two long-term experts based in Tirana, Halvard Skiri (October 2001-June 2003) and Børge Strand (September 2004 -August 2005)[1]. We have also included a report from a mission, "Aide-Memoire from a mission in June 2004 by Statistics Norway to Ministry of Local Development and Decentralisation, Tirana to prepare the second part of the pilot phase of the modernisation of the civil registration system in Albania", which was written by Helge Brunborg, Halvard Skiri and Børge Strand.

The first document on the cooperation was "Selected Documents on the Modernisation of the Civil Registration System in Albania", Documents 2004/2. This document can be downloaded from Statistics Norway's website at www.ssb.no/english/subjects/02/90/doc_200402_en/doc_200402_en.pdf.

All reports have benefited from comments from members of the project group in Oslo, which includes Helge Brunborg, Stein Opdahl, Halvard Skiri and Johan-Kristian Tønder.[1] The report for the second period, September 2004 -August 2005, has also received comments from the new resident expert in Albania, Anne Abelsæth[1]. Finally, we would like to acknowledge the valuable contribution to the project from our local project coordinator, Mirela Talka[1]. Helge Brunborg has been the editor of the present publication.

The project is funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway.

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List of acronyms

AP	The Assistance Project = The Pilot Project from 01 September 2004
CEC	Central Election Commission
CS	Civil Status (Civil Registration)
CSS	Civil Status Service
GDCS	General Directorate of Civil Status
FR	Fundamental Register
IFES	International Foundation for Election Systems
INSTAT	Albanian Institute of Statistics
IOM	International Organisation of Migration
ISSH	Institute of Social Insurance
MFA	Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affaires
MLGD	Albanian Ministry of Local Government and Decentralisation
NOK	Norwegian Kroner
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (of OSCE)
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PK	Primary key
SN	Statistics Norway
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services

Report on the first part of the pilot project: "Modernisation of the Civil Registration System in Albania"[2]

By Halvard Skiri

Summary

In 2000 Statistics Norway (SN) proposed to contribute to the modernisation of the civil registration system in Albania. The proposal included a modernisation project in three phases, of which the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affaires (MFA) was willing to fund the planning and pilot phases.

In the fall of 2001 SN established a project office in Tirana, with a long-term consultant and a project coordinator. MLGD became SN's counterpart. For several reasons the timetable turned out to be too optimistic, but grants for 2001 (4 million NOK) were made available for later use.

The objectives of the pilot phase is to develop a system, including a central database, tested out on computerised data from a few local CS offices, in order to gain experience before starting the full-scale modernisation. SN has contributed to new laws and to several project documents.

In January 2003 the counterparts signed a Protocol for the first part of the pilot phase, initially fixed for 1 December 2002 – 31 March 2003, covering activities and investments for the unused amount of 1.6 million NOK of the original grant for 2001. A study tour to Norway was carried out during the first half of 2003, five local offices were equipped with computers etc., employees were trained, and an awareness campaign was carried out.

Continued funding of the pilot phase was expected through an application sent to the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) in June 2003, but more funding was not confirmed before May 2004. However, advance funding by SN made it possible to keep the project office in Tirana operating with the project coordinator.

In early 2004 GDCS moved to its own premises and was partly equipped with computers etc. In four of the five pilot offices the family books had been fully computerised, but still no continuous updating ("real" modernisation) had taken place. The pilot phase has so far contributed valuable experience by identifying various problems, for example caused by power shortages.

For various reasons most activities have taken more time than expected, such as vacant positions at GDCS, the occupation of the GDCS existing with other tasks than the modernisation, and bureaucratic procedures and changes on both sides.

A SN team visited Tirana in June 2004 to prepare for the second part of the pilot phase, starting in September 2004. Future work will concentrate more on full computerisation (including continuous updating) of the pilot offices, establishment of a central database, a system for transfer of data between local offices and the central office (GDCS), and data quality issues.

[2] This report, which covers the period until the end of August 2004, is written on request from The Department of Integration of MLGD. It will also be sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway for information.

Introduction

During missions to Albania before the 2001 Census and 2001 parliamentary elections by Norwegian experts, the strong need to modernise the existing manual system for civil registration became evident to them. In addition, political changes and mass movements within and out of the country during the last decade had caused severe problems for the civil status service in Albania as the old system of civil registration did not reflect the recent demographic developments.

Thus, a bilateral project for modernisation of the system, funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and based on Statistics Norway's experience in this area, was proposed. The proposal, put forward in the fall of 2000, was well received by Albanian authorities and the MFA granted 4 million NOK to cover activities in 2001.

The proposal outlined a modernisation project in three phases:

- A planning phase,
- A pilot phase,
- A third phase covering nationwide modernisation of all civil status registers of Albania.

The last phase was considered to be too extensive for Norway to fund alone and funding should be sought among international donors.

The overall objective of the initiative is an improved administrative and computerised civil registration system for all of Albania. The specific objectives of the pilot phase are to develop a system tested out on computerised data from a limited number of local registries in order to gain experience before starting the nationwide modernisation.

The pilot phase, later also called the Pilot Project, will comprise completion of computerisation of a small number of local civil register offices, including routines for data entry, data checking, issuance of birth certificates, etc. The initial timetable turned out to be too optimistic. In the meantime, MFA transferred the responsibility for the second part of the pilot phase to NORAD in August 2002. A protocol between MLGD in Albania and Statistics Norway (SN) concerning the first part of the pilot phase, funded by the remaining grant from 2001, was signed in January 2003. This protocol was expected to cover the period 1 December 2002 – 31 March 2003, but the period could be extended in case of unforeseen circumstances.

Decisions and events up to January 2003

A chronological list of decisions and events of the Norwegian-funded project is given below:

- The first initiative on this project was taken by Helge Brunborg, Ph.D., of Statistics Norway in 1999, when he was member of a Council of Europe expert group for the Albanian 2001 population census. In particular, he had been asked to look at the relations between the census and other registers. While doing this he realised the strong need to modernise and update the existing manual book-based system.
- In connection with activities to prepare a basis for electoral lists for the parliamentary elections in 2001 OSCE asked the MFA to fund technical support from SN. The funding was granted and four SN experts visited Tirana in January 2000.
- Since OSCE proved to be mostly interested in elections, and not in civil registration, a bilateral project funded by the MFA was proposed. A project proposal for modernisation of the civil registration system (dated 8 November 2000) was sent from the Norwegian Embassy to the Government of Albania in November 2000.
- The project proposal was also presented to the Albanian authorities at a meeting in Tirana 21 March 2001, where it was well received.

- The draft Civil Status Law was discussed at a two-day meeting in the Ministry of Justice 19-20 March 2001, where experts from SN and Council of Europe, as well as Albanian experts, gave oral and written comments.
- In April-May 2001 a working group was appointed and the responsibility for the project was placed in the Ministry of Local Government (MLG).
- In May-June 2001 two SN experts visited Tirana to learn more about the situation before project start.
- In June 2001 the MFA granted 4.0 million NOK to SN to cover activities in 2001.
- During 10-12 September 2001 two representatives of the Central Electoral Commission, Mr. Gasper Koka, deputy leader, and Mr. Sokol Lamaj, visited Statistics Norway during the parliamentary election in Norway. They studied how voters' lists are prepared from the central population register and how elections are carried out in Norway.
- On the basis of the MFA grant SN recruited a long-term resident consultant, Mr. Halvard Skiri, who was established with an office and a project assistant (coordinator) in Tirana in October/November 2001. He also visited Tirana for one week in September 2001 to make preparations before the project start. In 2002 SN spent considerable effort on preparatory work, advice on the revision of the Law on Civil Status and other relevant laws, and to establish Albanian ownership of the project.
- Due to various circumstances such as changing government and an unclear situation as to responsibility on the Albanian side, very little progress was made until March 2002, when a period of progress started with project discussions and work on the draft Law on Civil Status.
- A revised project document (dated 22 May 2002) was presented to MLGD and MFA, which funded the first part of the pilot project.
- In July 2002 a Directory of Civil Status was established in MLGD and a director and two employees were appointed. The draft Law on Civil Status was approved by the Government, together with laws on ID number and ID document.
- The laws were approved by the Parliament on 10 October 2002 and the laws on Civil Status and on ID document have been in force since 28 November 2002. The law on ID number was in force from 13 November 2003.
- In August 2002 MFA transferred the responsibility for the rest of the pilot project to NORAD, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, which has different procedures for allocating funds to development projects. Hence, the project document of 22 May 2002 was not any longer appropriate as an application for funding.
- In September 2002 a Statistics Norway IT specialist with long experience on registers and demographic statistics, Mr. Torgeir Vik, visited Tirana on a one-week mission. The reference group for the project had its first meeting, of three in total, during his visit.
- During the fall of 2002 much effort was spent on preparation of an agreement between MLGD and SN and on a separate project document comprising the first part of the pilot phase. A team from SN, Mr. Helge Brunborg and Mr. Stein Opdahl, visited Tirana for one week in November in order to accelerate this work and plan the pilot phase.
- During the round-table conference on CR arranged by OSCE/ODIHR on 3 December 2002 the resident SN long-term consultant presented the civil registration system in Norway, which was later translated into Albanian.
- An agreement for the period 1 December 2002 - 31 March 2003, called 'Protocol', was signed by the Albanian Ministry of Local Government and Decentralisation on 13 January 2003 and by Statistics Norway on 16 January 2003.

Progress report

This report covers the period until the end of August 2004. The Protocol signed in January 2003 between the Albanian Ministry of Local Government and Decentralisation (MLGD) and Statistics Norway (SN) regarding the modernisation project was initially expected to cover only the period 1

December 2002 to 31 March 2003. Due to delays and some money still available from the 2001 funding, together with advance payment from SN for enabling continuation of the project until further funding was in place, the Protocol remained in force until the end of August 2004. The new Protocol (signed 2 February 2005) covers the period 1 September 2004 - 31 August 2005. From the SN point of view this modernisation project started already in 2001, as indicated above and in the accounts.

A more thorough description of the background for the modernisation project, the project plans, revision of the plans etc up to June 2003, is given in the publication "Selected Documents on the Modernisation of the Civil Registration System in Albania", Statistics Norway, Documents 2004/2, electronic version available at
http://www.ssb.no/english/subjects/02/90/doc_200402_en/doc_200402_en.pdf.

The resident Norwegian-funded project staff in Tirana up to 31 August 2004 has been:

- Mr. Halvard Skiri, SN Project Leader (long-term consultant), 18 October 2001- 30 June 2003.
- Ms. Mirela Talka, SN Project Coordinator, 14 November 2001 – 31 August 2004.

The resident SN staff has all the time been supported by a team in SN, Oslo (home coordination). In periods with a SN long-term consultant resident in Tirana, telephone meetings have been arranged 1-2 times a month to discuss plans and problems. After the long-term consultant left Tirana in June 2003 requests and questions from MLGD/GDCS to SN have partly been received and answered by the resident SN Project Coordinator, partly forwarded or sent directly to SN for answer. Among the requests during the period July 2003 – August 2004 the majority were about introduction of ID numbers, software, addresses and maintenance of a central database. This service was well received by MLGD/GDCS.

During the first part of the pilot phase SN had valuable assistance from the Norwegian Embassy in Tirana, including practical support.

Objectives of the modernisation project

While the overall objective of the current Norwegian initiative is an improved administrative and computerised registration system for all of Albania, the objective of the Norwegian-funded pilot project is to develop a *system* that could be tested out on computerised data from a limited number of local registries (CS offices) in order to gain experience before starting the full-scale modernisation. This includes modernised local pilot registries, a central register (database), and a network and system for exchange of data between local registries and the central register. The pilot phase comprises completion of the computerisation of a number of local civil register offices (16 according to the project document of June 2003), including routines for data entry, data checking, issuance of birth certificates, etc.

The main ideas of the proposal of 8 November 2000 presented to the Government of Albania on 21 March 2001 are still valid, although the proposal has later been revised on 22 May 2002, 22 November 2002 and in June 2003. However, due to later developments the pilot phase may include more components than originally envisaged, in particular more pilot offices. Moreover, due to administrative requirements in Norway the pilot phase had to be divided into two parts, 1 December 2002 - 31 March 2003 and 1 April 2003 - 31 December 2004. The reasons for this are explained below.

Why two parts of the pilot phase

Based on the project proposal of 8 November 2000 and a revised budget the project was approved by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in June 2001. The two initial phases, the planning phase and the pilot phase, were initially planned to be finished in 2001. The total budget for these phases was originally estimated at 7.6 million NOK[3], of which the MFA granted 4.0 million NOK to

[3] With an exchange rate of 1 USD = 7.5 NOK, 7.6 million NOK is about 1 million USD.

SN to cover activities in 2001, according to the revised timetable, which assumed completion of the pilot phase in 2002.
Due to the delay in starting the project only a minor part of the grant was spent in 2001 and the remaining funds were transferred for use in 2002. The planned activities were further delayed in 2002, resulting in an unused amount of about 1.6 million NOK as of 1 December 2002. MFA has agreed that the remaining part of this amount may be transferred to 2003.

The purpose of this report is to describe the first part of the pilot phase, the activities which were scheduled to take place by the end of March 2003. However, because these two parts are very closely linked to each other, and since the first one started in January 2003, a brief presentation of the plans for the whole pilot phase is included below in order to give an overview of the project.

Since the two first phases required more time and efforts for implementation than originally planned, a revised project proposal with a total budget of 9.5 million NOK was presented to MFA in June 2002, including the 4.0 million NOK already granted to SN for the project for the year 2001. However, the MFA did not review the revised project proposal, since it in August 2002 transferred the responsibility for implementing financial support to the project to NORAD.

The November 2002 plan for the first part of the pilot phase, 1 December 2002 – 31 March 2003[4]
After the planning mission to Tirana in November 2002 the plan for the first part of the pilot phase was to contribute to the modernisation of the Tirana administrative units number 3, 7, 10 and 11 and Kavaja Municipality, as well as the rural commune of Preza and the mainly rural municipality of Klos in the Mat District.

During this first part Statistics Norway planned to provide technical and some financial assistance to the establishment of the central office, the General Directory of Civil Status (GDCS). The financial assistance during this period was thought to be rather limited, however, since the Directory was not expected to move into new premises before February 2003 (or later) and since the planning and ordering of computer hardware and software would take some time.

According to the November 2002 plan an important part of the Statistics Norway assistance to the Directory during this period was expected to be assistance in writing a plan for modernising all CS offices in Albania as well as designing the specifications for a tender for the software and hardware required for this. This would include software for the local offices and the Directory as well as for the exchange of information between the local offices and the central database.

The principles behind the choice of the local offices to be modernised in the first part of the pilot phase were:

- Some offices (Tirana 10 and 11 and Kavaja Municipality) have already started or have completed computerisation of the "fundamental register", which include data on all persons registered in a commune or municipality, organised in families. This will save money on computers and data entry for the Project and will enable an earlier start of modernising the daily running of a civil status office, such as using computer printouts for certificates (to be signed, sealed and stamped).
- For some offices there is an urgent need for computerisation due to a large discrepancy between the registered and the actual population (Tirana 3 and 7, according to Tirana Municipality).
- NORAD expressed a strong interest in modernising one commune in the Burrel region, since NORAD was already involved in funding a water project in that area.
- There was a need to obtain experience form the computerisation of some rural communes. We proposed Preza, northwest of Tirana, and the municipality of Klos near Burrel, which is an administrative unit comprising a small city and 13 villages.

[4] Dates are according to the planning mission in November 2002. Since activities started later than envisaged, this part has been prolonged in accordance with the Protocol.

The plan for the second part of the pilot phase, 1 July 2003 – 31 December 2004[5]

During the *second* part of the pilot phase Statistics Norway planned, especially in 2003, to provide substantial technical assistance to the GDCS as well as preparation for and administration of tenders, and would procure the hardware and software that is required in the pilot phase.

Important tasks in the second part would be to assist in developing the GDCS and establishing the National Civil Status Register (the central database), to assist in improving routines, preparing sub-legal acts, manuals, regulations etc., and to design specifications for a tender for the software to be used after the pilot phase. Assistance would also be given on planning a service for distribution of Civil Status data from the National Civil Status Register and on improving the addresses, aiming at a uniform national system.

Statistics Norway would also help in setting up a computerised system for exchange of data between local offices and the central database and start implementing the procedures for doing this as the pilot offices complete the modernisation process.[6] The local SC offices to be modernised during the second part are given in table 1. However, since the Municipality of Padua did not succeed in getting funding, hardware, software, data entry and training for Tirana 6, 9 and 9 were included in the budget.

Statistics Norway has considered the *real* modernisation to start in the second part of the pilot phase, because this work could begin only *after* the data in the fundamental registers ("family books") have been computerised. This is when all new births, deaths, marriages, divorces, changes of names, transfers from other offices, etc. are be entered into the computer on a regular basis, preferably daily, to keep the register continuously updated. Moreover, the existing Civil Status data need to be checked for errors, including duplicates, and technical and legal procedures for corrections need to be worked out. This is the stage where technical assistance from Statistics Norway, based on almost forty years of experience with the Norwegian Central Population Register, is assumed to be of the greatest value to Albania.

[5] In previous versions designed to start 1 April 2003.

[6] There will be a period when some local offices have been modernised whereas others have not yet started this process. This interim period will present special challenges, for example, for cases of transfer of civil status documents (family moves) from a traditional to a modernised CS office or vice versa.

Table 1. Plan for modernisation of local civil status offices in the pilot phase[1]

Office	Prefecture (Qark)	District	Population[2] CS figures	Records to be entered	Total costs, USD	Data entry, USD
First part - to be started during 1.12.2002-31.3.2003						
Tirana 3	Tirana	Tirana	32 000	16 000	1 600	1 600
Tirana 7	Tirana	Tirana	46 000	23 000	2 300	2 300
Tirana 10[3]	Tirana	Tirana	24 000	-	-	-
Tirana 11[3]	Tirana	Tirana	54 000	-	-	-
Preza commune	Tirana	Tirana	5 900	-	-	-
Kavaja municipality[3]	Tirana	Kavaja	*24 800*	-	-	-
Klos municipality	Diber	Mat	13 000	11 700	1 800	1 800
Second part - to be started after 31.3.2003						
Tirana 1	Tirana	Tirana	70 000	112 000	29 800	16 800
Tirana 2	Tirana	Tirana	35 000[4]	56 000	21 400	8 400
Tirana 4	Tirana	Tirana	56 000	89 600	26 400	13 400
Tirana 5	Tirana	Tirana	54 000	86 400	26 000	13 000
Golem commune	Tirana	Kavaja	9 400	18 000	8 000	2 700
Kavaja District Centre	Tirana	Kavaja	.	-	6 200	-
Koder Thumane com.	Durrës	Kruja	*13 100*	13 100	6 600	1 300
Total			ca 440 000	425 800	130 100	61 300
The Municipality of Padua has proposed to fund and advice on the modernisation of the following offices, probably starting after 31.3.2003						
Tirana 6	Tirana	Tirana	46 000	46 000	20 000	7 000
Tirana 8	Tirana	Tirana	35 000	35 000	16 500	5 400
Tirana 9	Tirana	Tirana	41 000	41 000	19 300	6 300
Total			122 000	122 000	55 800	18 700

1 This table, which is taken from the application to NORAD of June 2003, is an updated version of the one in the project document of 22 November 2002 regarding costs and records to be entered (covering all books). Figures on costs and records to be entered do only cover the activities to be funded by NORAD. Tirana 3, 7, 10 and 11, together with Preza and Klos have partly or fully been funded from other sources.
2 Population figures in *italics* refer to the 2001 Population Census.
3 The data entry in these offices has already started or has been finished as part of separate projects funded or organised by other international agencies, such as ODIHR, IFES and Soros Foundation.
4 The figure has been corrected from 85 000 in a previous version.

Accomplishment of the first part of the pilot phase, January 2003 – August 2004

The first part of the pilot turned out to last until end of August 2004 since the Protocol was still in force. According to the plan (see table 1) seven local CS offices should be computerised during the first part of the pilot phase. However, after a strong wish from MLGD computerisation of the office in Tirana 3 was moved to the second part in order to meet the urgent needs for modernisation in the neighbouring municipality of Kamëz with a branch office in the problem area Bathore. Equipment planned for Tirana 10 and 11 and for Kavaja was never distributed to these two offices, partly because of too little office space and partly because of a situation requiring more special follow up.

Investment in hardware etc. was planned with enough capacity for the future nation-wide modernisation and also in order to secure enough and stable power supply in all offices. The extent and timing of procurement were decided in agreement with MLGD. A principle was that every employee should have his/her own computer, as soon as the physical conditions of the office were met acceptable. The investment consisted of:

a. Hardware:
- Desktop computer for each CS employee
- Laser Jet printers
- CD writer
- Inverter and batteries (for independent power supply)

b. Software:
- MS Windows SVR 2000 5 CLT (operative system)
- INHABREG & CIVSTA application (developed by Intech)

c. Training:
- one week of general computer training for each CS employee

d. Operators for data entry

The data entry is considered completed in four pilot project offices. In the office of the municipality of Klos the data entry process is still going on, for special reasons.

The financial assistance to GDCS provided by Statistics Norway during the first half of 2003 was rather limited, as expected. The plan was to procure hardware etc. for the central office (GDCS) during the second part of the pilot phase. However, as no decision on the application to NORAD for funding of a second part appeared during 2003 and the need for hardware became evident, SN decided to advance some hardware for GDCS from remaining funding.

In March 2004 SN provided financial assistance to the GDCS for:
- 2 desktop computers
- 2 printers and fax machine
- Photocopy machine
- UPS etc.

The MLGD initiated, in collaboration with SN, an awareness campaign on the civil registration to the civil status offices. This awareness campaign consisted on posters, leaflets and TV spots and was financed by the SN project (10 000 USD). This awareness campaign, which was carried out in June 2003, was considered successful, because afterwards a considerable percentage of residents reported moves; that is they started the procedure to transfer their CS documents to their new place of residence.

An important part of Statistics Norway's assistance to the Directory during this period has been to prepare a brief plan with cost estimates for the modernisation of the whole civil status service in Albania. The work to design specifications for a tender for the software and hardware required for this was also started. These specifications were expected to include software for the local offices and the Directory as well as for the exchange of information between the local offices and the central database. SN offered assistance on this task, but did not get more involved in this since MLGD decided to arrange an open international tender on the nation-wide modernisation.

However, in March 2003 OSCE asked the SN staff for rough cost estimates needed for the funding needs for the nation-wide CS modernisation. Two weeks later SN presented a brief plan with cost estimates on a nation-wide CS modernisation in Albania to OSCE and MLGD. This document was well received by both, and served as a basis for the EU Commission’s possible fund raising of the full-scale modernisation project.

After the long-term consultant left Tirana in June 2003 the resident SN Project Coordinator continued to serve the Pilot Project, assisted by SN staff in Norway. Her main activity during this period was assisting the pilot offices in different problems they had related with the new process: Finding and hiring operators, collecting problems faced with the software and hardware (mainly equipments damaged because of power problems) and trying to resolve these problems with Intech technicians and

the hardware providers. Training had to be organised for the second time for those employees of the pilot offices that had been appointed after local elections. She arranged many meetings with mayors to resolve power problems and to try to convince them to reduce the working hours open for the public, in order to give time for data entry, updating etc.

Decisions and events January 2003 – August 2004

- An important activity during this period was the study tour to Norway. It was carried out 3-8 February 2003 and included three persons, of which two from MLGD (Mr. Bledar Andona, Adviser of the Minister of MGLD and Ms. Elvira Dervishi, Director of the Department of Civil Status), Mr. Ilir Beqja, Deputy Director General of ISSH, in addition to the SN staff in Tirana (Mr. Skiri and Ms. Talka). Unfortunately the Director General of INSTAT and a third representative of MLGD were not able to join the delegation, as planned. The tour included visits to Statistics Norway, the Central Population Register, local population registers, the Mapping Authority (with the Property, Address and Building Register) and some distributors and users of population register data.
- In February 2003 the urgent need for software and hardware was much discussed, based on different strategic views. An SN initiative to collaborate with IFES/ECE on computerisation (data entry because of the coming election) of the pilot offices in Tirana was discussed and agreed on, but this solution was dropped by MLGD in the middle of March, because of CEC's lack of confidence to the IFES procedure.
- On 17 March 2003 SN presented the document "Nation-wide modernisation of the Civil Registration System in Albania – A brief plan with cost estimates (Second draft)". Hardware for Tirana 10 and Tirana 11 was procured in March 2003 and for Preza and Klos in the first half of April 2003. However, priorities were changed. Necessary installations of Intech software etc. were effectively carried out, mainly by Intech. In April Intech also arranged training of two CS employees.
- An obligatory evaluation meeting of the project (according to Albanian rules, since the formal period of the Protocol had expired), was held on 4 April, requested by MLGD.
- The start of the modernisation of local CS offices was marked by a presentation and demonstration of new equipment in Preza on 27 May, with Minister Blushi, Prefect, Mayor and press (television etc.) present. Similar arrangements took place in Kamez and Bathore in early June.
- The SN long-term resident consultant left Albania after 20 months' stay on 13 June 2003.
- The MLGD application to NORAD for 5.3 million NOK for funding of the second part of the pilot phase (project) was sent on 20 June 2003.
- In May 2003 EU granted one million € for data entry of CS books for 2003 through the CARDS program. Another two million € was likely to be granted for 2004. These figures were confirmed in a round table meeting organised by the EU Delegation in Tirana on 24 November 2003. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss how best EU funds could be used, in the light of the needs of the stakeholders and of past and present work accomplished by key donors like Soros Foundation, USAID and Norway. The conclusion of this meeting was that the funds for 2003 (one million €) should be used for building up an address system.
- In first half of November 2003 the French company Valtech Axelboss was chosen by MLGD to carry out a feasibility study of CSS modernisation. Valtech presented their proposal ("blueprint") in December 2003.
- Hardware and equipment for the central CS office (GDCS) were procured in March 2004.
- The positive answer from MFA about more funding of the project was received in May 2004. After reorganisation MFA was again responsible for any continued funding of the project.
- Ms. Elvira Dervishi resigned as the acting leader of GDCS in May 2004. In June 2004 she was succeeded by Ms. Brizida Gjikondi, who very soon became in charge of GDCS. However, she was suspended from her position in early November 2004. In February 2005 her position is still vacant.

- The opening of the international tender for the modernisation of the CS Servise took place in August 2004. In November MLGD declared that the tender was "annulled", and not successful – without offering any explanation.

Project delays – reasons
As described above the pilot phase (project) was significantly delayed. There are many reasons for this, including:

- It took a long time before Albanian ownership of the project was established. Almost one year and 10 months elapsed since the Albanian Government welcomed the Norwegian project proposal in March 2001 until the first binding document, the Protocol, was signed in January 2003. Norway was ready to sign a binding document at an early stage but the Albanian side was not yet ready. And when MLGD urged an agreement in September 2002, Norway was unfortunately not able to react fast, mainly because of formalities on both sides: The Albanian side wanted only *one* agreement for the future. This wish was considered very problematic by SN, since the future would be funded partly by new grants, partly by money already transferred to SN. In addition the transfer of responsibility for continued funding of the project from MFA to NORAD implied several bureaucratic changes regarding formulation and signing of an agreement and stronger requirements of the application. Because of the transfer of responsibility the project document of 22 May 2002 was not a sufficient basis for an application for continued funding.
- MLGD would not consider any pilot phase (Norwegian-funded project) as started until an agreement (Protocol) was signed.
- Approval of the draft agreement (Protocol) on the Albanian side took 5 weeks in December 2002 – January 2003.
- The project progress from May 2001, when a SN team visited MLGD, until March 2002 was very small. Important reasons for this were divided responsibility for CS affaire (between MLGD and Ministry of Justice) and frequent change of government.
- The progress of work on the Albanian side on the new law on civil status was slow until July 2002.
- There was also a delay of three weeks due the waiting for the CEC decision about their view on the collaboration between MLGD/SN and IFES/CEC on computerisation of CS information in Tirana in front of the 2003 election.
- SN spent a long time to complete the application to NORAD in first half of 2003.
- Since the organisation of the Norway's bilateral assistance was being reviewed and reorganised when the application to NORAD was sent, the processing of it took eleven months instead of the usual four months.

Problems in collaboration
More generally, the carrying out of the first part of the pilot phase has been less effective than it could (and should) have been. MLGD has not met some of its obligations according to Article IV of the Protocol:
"The Ministry shall make all reasonable efforts to facilitate the successful implementation of the Pilot, and shall hereunder: ……

2. provide sufficient adequate office space for project staff, including the SN long term consultant and other project personnel, within the permanent premises of the General Directory of Civil Status;

3. provide sufficient qualified local personnel for the successful implementation of the Pilot;

4. provide the long term consultant and other project personnel with access to such data and information, including visits to local sites, as may be reasonably requested to ensure the successful completion of the Pilot; …"

Comments:
Adequate and suitable office space together with MLGD/GDCS was not offered SN until June 2004.

Only one of the three top leader positions of GDCS has ever been occupied, and since November 2004 all of them have been vacant.

MLGD/GDCS has, according to SN, showed little understanding of the importance of the need for exchanging information, to ask SN about advice concerning the "right" (important) matters and to ask for advice in time. SN can, however, see that rigid Albanian laws and rules have caused problems, for example that actions or "orders" have to be finished within 6 months after a law is in force.

SN also regrets the observation that MLGD, partly for the reasons mentioned above, has not been able to keep a steady pressure on the pilot modernisation project. Unfortunately, as to project progress, the insufficient GDCS staff has in several long periods been occupied with *other* tasks than modernisation, thus not being able to follow up on development and modernisation aspects. Such a situation has meant severe problems in the Norwegian-funded efforts to contribute to a successful modernisation. It seems that the interest and activity for modernisation on the Albanian side tends to reach a top in a period in front of each election, but slows down again when the voters' lists have been finished. With an election every second year such *ad hoc* efforts are not promising for future CS improvement.

MLGD seems not to share SN's view on the purpose of a pilot project: a small-scale project to gain useful experience before the nation-wide modernisation. The decision to prepare an extensive international tender for the full-scale project *before* the pilot was really started, implied in that the GDCS staff was occupied with tender preparations instead of the pilot. In addition, the tender proved not to be successful since it was cancelled. An example of the usefulness of a pilot phase is the testing of equipment to secure stable power for hardware installations. Without such tests in a *real* situation large amounts of funding may be wasted.

Observations and conclusions in June 2004

A mission to observe the current situation
A team from Statistics Norway (SN) visited Ministry of Local Government and Decentralisation, Tirana during 14 to 20 June 2004 to observe the current situation for the modernisation project in order to start the second part of the pilot phase. The team comprised Mr. Helge Brunborg, Mr. Halvard Skiri, and Mr. Børge Strand, the new long-term resident consultant in the second part of the project.

The background for the mission was the recent grant from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affaires (MFA) for the second part of the pilot phase, according to MLGD's application to NORAD dated June 2003.

Since the project document attached to the application was written 12 months earlier, the main purpose of the mission was to review the project document based on developments and experiences during this period. At the time of visit the most important of these developments was considered to be the Valtech Axelboss plan for the nation-wide modernisation and the upcoming international tender for implementation of this plan and the pronounced need for a national address system. In particular the mission wanted to learn more about:

- MLGD's current view on the nation-wide modernisation plan, including issuing ID cards, and the timing of the implementation, cf. the news that the Albanian Government has granted 7 million € for this purpose,
- Statistics Norway's and the pilot phase's role in relation to the most recent nation-wide plans,
- the current situation at the Central office (GDCS) and the local pilot offices, and
- the view of other authorities and institutions in Albania – national and international – on the nation-wide modernisation plan, in particular how the preparation of voting lists for the parliamentary elections in 2005 may benefit from the nation-wide modernisation project.

Observations of development, experiences, problems and challenges
With reference to MLGD's nation-wide modernisation plan Minister Blushi was asked about how SN could contribute in the future. Mr. Blushi welcomed SN to go on with the pilot phase, saying that much useful experience had been a result of the first part. The SN team pointed out that there is a need to develop the Central office and the five local offices which have been modernised already, that more basic IT knowledge is necessary in local offices, and that updating of local databases has to start. Furthermore, it was underlined that certificates that can technically be printed by the computer should be considered valid in addition to the certificates written manually. Finally it was underlined that draft regulations and instructions prepared by MLGD should be presented to SN for information and possible comments *before* publication, to enable *real* advice to be given.

During the stay in Tirana the SN team made some positive as well as some negative observations, giving basis for these reflections:

- In the pilot offices the computerisation of family books (fundamental registers) has been finished, more or less. However, no daily updating has so far been done on computers, only in manual books, like earlier. Hence, there is double work.
- Certificates are still written by hand, even if they could technically be printed from computerised data, provided sufficient updating.
- The problems in the five local pilot offices already equipped with hardware and software, caused by unstable electrical power supply and low voltage, have turned out to be more severe than expected, even if special arrangements (inverter and batteries) were installed initially by the Pilot project. This is an important learning from the Pilot Project.
- More importance needs to be attached to backup units and backup equipment, especially in those offices not being considered "ordinary" local pilot offices of this project. Hence, the CS office in Tirana no. 10 (and possibly no. 11) has an urgent need for a backup unit.
- The Central Office (GDCS) was equipped with two computers and other equipment needed in March 2004, but no database tool – e.g. the Intech software used in local offices – has been installed. Hence, no central database has been established based on data from pilot offices. Assigning of ID numbers has started, but only for newborn since 1 January 2004. Unfortunately the assigning is already far behind, due to inefficient routines. There may also be some conflict with the ISSH numbers that have already been assigned.
- It is positive that the GDCS, in collaboration with the relevant local offices, is working to find out about - and remove - some 150 000 duplicates identified by the Central Election Committee (CEC). There are cases where the same person has been registered in up to six local offices.
- IT personnel are said to be problematic to recruit in Tirana, because of the low level of wages that can be offered.
- Since experience and continuity are very important in the establishing phase, the team was not happy to learn about the resignation of the employee with the longest experience in the GDCS. Similarly, it was disappointing to hear that some employees in local pilot offices have been dismissed by the new mayor elected after the local elections last year, regardless of their special training for this job.
- The team was pleased to learn that GDCS has finally obtained its own premises.
- SN strongly supports the generous UNOPS offer to computerise the CS offices in Durrës and Shkodër, using new software from the University of Shkodër. This is an excellent opportunity to gain experience from working with different software and companies. The SN project staff visited Shkodër together with MLGD staff already in February 2003 in order to know more about the software under development there, because it could represent an alternative to the Intech software.
- SN welcomes the recent plan to introduce a national address system in Albania. A modern and well functioning address system is a crucial part of a civil registration system, as well as for other administrative and statistical purposes.

The SN team visiting Tirana found that software and the upcoming international call for tender were subjects of great interest. The impression was that MLGD is still concerned about the “correct” choice of software for future, with less concern that the system – independent of which soft and hardware that be chosen – has to be filled with data, and that the data need to be cleaned to be of adequate quality. It should be pointed out that the solution for a central database of the pilot phase does not imply any choice of database solution for the future nation-wide system: The data in the database may be transferred from a preliminary system to any permanent system without problems. SN made it clear to MLGD in June 2003 that the Norwegian funding will cover software only during the pilot phase.

The Valtech Axelboss PowerPoint presentation of the modernisation plan ("blueprint") mainly describes the system, with very little focus on the data. The presentation is general, with few controversial items. Hence, some important facts were not mentioned, like the large number of multiple entries for the same persons. In the blueprint itself the concept 'duplicate' was defined, but very unsatisfactory, comprising only duplicates that are easy to indentify. According to the information received during the mission, the SN team found the timetable of the nation-wide plan to be too short and demanding. The SN team said that SN needs to know more about the plans as soon as the winner of the international tender is known, for the purpose of coordination.

The team also noticed a strong focus on the ID number. There seems to be some confusion about the difference between an ID number and linking keys in a certain database system, for example the primary key in the Intech database system. Some people seem to think that this primary key would bind up for the future ID numbers. However, every database system needs a unique identification of the records in the system, which is a feature of the Intech system.

The team was happy to get more information and documentation from Intech, including an electronic copy of the data model for the Intech software. This data model will be used for SN internal purposes only. Still the team is missing the specifications for the data model.

Because of recent experience with insufficient infrastructure within or near Tirana, an online-connection to a central database still seems to have to wait for the far future. However, in the meantime the data should flow regularly between the central office and the local offices.

Proposal: Full computerisation of pilot CS offices and some others

During the meetings in Tirana the SN team mentioned several proposals for improving and speeding up the modernisation process, all of them being mentioned in the project document from MLGD for the *second* part of the pilot phase. However, there was no time for a thorough discussion of those issues.

One proposal would be to fully computerise the Civil Status Registries (CS offices) that have finished (or are close to finish) digitising the fundamental books (and the acts of births, deaths and marriages). By full computerisation is meant that the daily updating of the fundamental register with data on new births, deaths, marriages, divorces, moves from other CS offices, name changes, etc., is done using the computer only, and likewise that all new certificates are produced and printed by the computer, only to be checked, stamped and signed by the CS office employees. Currently several local offices do double work, manually on paper in the old way and to a limited extent using the computer (mainly as an index). This increases the workload of the local employees and prevents them from benefiting from the improved efficiency and accuracy of a computerised system.

Thus, SN proposed that these local CS offices abandon the entry of events into books but rely on computers only, except when older data are needed. If considered absolutely necessary, there could perhaps be a brief trial period of 1-2 months when the data are entered into books as well. The full computerisation is, of course, planned to be implemented some time in the future for all of Albania, but it is very important to learn as much as possible from the experience of a limited number of

offices. This will both increase the speed of the modernisation as well as reduce errors and problems during the modernisation process.

An additional advantage of the full computerisation would be a regular checking and cleaning of the data, because errors detected by the residents who come to collect their certificates may be corrected immediately in the computer.

SN would also like to emphasise the need for backup of the data that have been computerised in the CS offices. There are some offices where no backup has ever been taken, with a high risk of a serious loss if the computer is destroyed or stolen.
SN thinks that the transition to full computerisation of all functions of the CS offices should be done in *all* offices that have entered the fundamental registers, not only in the five pilot offices funded by Norway. There is about twelve such offices altogether, comprising more than ½ million records (people). The implementation and testing of the computerised procedures will imply that the full modernisation of the remaining 400 offices in Albania can be done much faster and more efficiently, due to the lessons learned from the pilot phase.

Proposal: Transfer to a central database
Statistics Norway's second proposal is that all local computerised fundamental registers (and also the acts of births, deaths and marriages) be transferred to the planned central database of the General Directory as soon as possible. (This may at this stage be done most easily by copying each local database to a CD.) These local databases should be merged to constitute a central civil status database. This database can be used for developing software and routines for checking and cleaning the data, including removal of duplicates, and transfer of data between local and central databases. Moreover, and not the least, routines may be developed for the handling of moves of residents between two local CS offices.

This process will also yield valuable experience that will contribute to a much faster and safer modernisation of the CS system for all of Albania. Databases for additional local offices may be added as soon as they become ready.

Accounts January 2001 - August 2004

Table 2 shows costs of the project invoiced to MFA up to the end of August 2004. The grant given by MFA in 2001 was 4 million NOK. Waiting for the decision of continued funding from NORAD/MFA Statistics Norway in 2004 decided to support the project with payment in advance, making it possible to still keep the project office in Tirana and the resident local Project Coordinator.

The project office was in January 2002 taken over from the Norwegian People's Aid, which left Albania during 2002. The Norwegian People's Aid donated a major part of their computers, fax machine, copy machine, furniture and other office equipment to the pilot project. Thus, very little new equipment was purchased for the project office during this period.

Likewise, it was not necessary to invest in a project car, since a car provided for the international Police Project in Albania in 1999-2001 was made available for the project from December 2001 by the Norwegian Embassy in Tirana, in agreement with MFA. The project took over the responsibility for the car, including maintenance and renting to other possible Norwegian companies in Tirana, mainly NORWAC. Thus the project has had almost no net expenses on the car. Accounts for the project car for December 2001 to June 2003 are available.

Table 2. Semi-annual accounts 1 January 2001 - 31 August 2004. NOK

Period	Year	Total costs invoiced	Long-term adviser	Short-term advisers	Home coordination	Local staff	Study trips	Local investment
1 January - 30 June	2001	314 407	0	314 407	0	0	0	0
1 July - 31 December	2001	393 665	253 000	140 665	0	0	0	0
1 January - 30 June	2002	598 000	598 000	0	0	0	0	0
1 July - 31 December	2002	1 244 094	650 000	191 001	175 000	120 000	0	108 094
1 January - 30 June	2003	1 151 693	650 000	0	175 000	60 000	132 469	134 224
1 July - 31 December	2003	291 949	0	0	175 000	60 000	0	56 949
1 January - 31 August	2004	456 012	0	180 997	100 000	89 976	0	73 490
Total 2001-2004		**4 449 820**	2 151 000	827 070	625 000	329 976	132 469	372 757

Reference documents

Statistics Norway, Department of Social Statistics and the Albanian Ministry of Local Government and Decentralisation (2004):

Selected Documents on the Modernisation of the Civil Registration System in Albania. Statistics Norway. Documents 2004/2. Electronic version: http://www.ssb.no/english/subjects/02/90/doc_200402_en/doc_200402_en.pdf.

This publication contains the following documents:

- Modernisation of the Civil Registration System in Albania *Project proposal of 8 November 2000*

- Modernisation of the Civil Registration System in Albania: The pilot phase *Revised project document, of 22 November 2002*

- Modernisation of the Civil Registration System in Albania. Pilot Project. Second part: 1 July 2003 - 31 December 2004 *Application to NORAD of June 2003, for funding the second part of the pilot phase*

- Nation-wide modernisation of the Civil Registration System in Albania – A brief plan with cost estimates (Second draft) *Document prepared for the purpose of funding the full-scale modernisation project*

- Law No. 8950, dated 10.10.2002, on the Civil Status *The new law on civil registration*

- Law No. 8951, dated 10.10.2002, on the identity number of citizens

- Protocol between the Ministry of Local Government and Decentralisation, Albania, and Statistics Norway, regarding Modernisation of the Civil Registration System in Albania *Covers the period 1 December 2002 – 31 March 2003.*

Other reference documents:

- Modernisation of the Civil Registration System in Albania *Revised project document, of 22 May 2002*

- Aide-Memoire from a mission in June 2004 by Statistics Norway to Ministry of Local Development and Decentralisation, Tirana to prepare the second part of the pilot phase of the modernisation of the civil registration system in Albania (8 September 2004)

Aide-Memoire from a mission in June 2004 by Statistics Norway to Ministry of Local Development and Decentralisation, Tirana to prepare the second part of the pilot phase of the modernisation of the civil registration system in Albania

By Helge Brunborg, Halvard Skiri and Børge Strand

A team from Statistics Norway (SN) visited Ministry of Local Development and Decentralisation, Tirana during 14 to 20 June 2004 to observe the current situation for the modernisation project in order to start the second part of the pilot phase. The team comprised Mr. Helge Brunborg, Researcher at the Division of Demographic and Social Research; Mr. Halvard Skiri, Senior Statistical Adviser at the Department of Social Statistics (and the previous long term consultant on the project); and Mr. Børge Strand, candidate for the position as the next long term consultant.

Background

The background for the mission was the recent grant from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affaires (MFA) for the second part of the pilot phase, according to MLGD's application to NORAD dated June 2003. The long time lag between application and approval was primarily due to a major reorganisation of Norway's aid to foreign countries.

Purpose

Since the project document attached to the application was written 12 months ago, the main purpose of the mission was to review the project document based on developments and experiences during this period. The most important of these developments is the Valtech Axelboss plan for the nation-wide modernisation and the upcoming international tender for implementation of this plan and the need for a national address system. In particular the mission wanted to learn more about:

- MLGD's current view on the nation-wide modernisation plan, including issuing ID cards, and the timing of the implementation, cf. the news that the Albanian Government has granted 7 million € for this purpose,
- Statistics Norway's and the pilot phase's role in relation to the most recent nation-wide plans,
- the current situation at the Central office (General Directory of Civil Status Service) and the local pilot offices, and
- the view of other authorities and institutions' in Albania – national and international – on the nation-wide modernisation plan, in particular how the preparation of voting lists for the parliamentary elections in 2005 may benefit from the nation-wide modernisation project.

Observations of development, problems etc.

In addition to Minister Blushi, the General Director of Civil Status Service who was appointed formally just after our mission, Ms. Brizida Gjikondi, and other MLGD and CS staff, the SSB team met a number of persons associated with the modernisation project.

The SN team met Minister Blushi at the beginning of the visit. With reference to MLGD's nation-wide modernisation plan Mr. Blushi was asked about how SN could contribute in the future. Mr. Blushi welcomed SN to go on with the pilot phase, saying that much useful experience had been a result of the first part. The SN team pointed out that there is a need to develop the Central office and the five local offices which have been modernised already, that more basic IT knowledge is necessary in local

offices, and that updating of local databases has to start. Furthermore, it was underlined that certificates that can technically be printed by the computer should be considered valid in addition to the certificates written manually. Finally it was underlined that draft regulations and instructions prepared by MLGD should be presented to the SN long time consultant for information and possible comments *before* publication, to enable *real* advice to be given.

During the stay in Tirana the SN team made some positive as well as some negative observations, giving basis for these reflections:

- In the pilot offices the computerisation of family books (fundamental registers) has been finished, more or less. However, no daily updating has so far been done on computers, only in manual books, like earlier. Hence, some double work is done.
- Certificates are still written in by hand, even if they could technically be printed from computerised data, provided sufficient updating.
- The problems met in the five local pilot offices already equipped with hardware and software, caused by unstable electrical power supply and low voltage, have turned out to be more severe than expected, even if special arrangements (inverter and batteries) were installed initially.
- More importance needs to be attached to backup units and backup equipment, especially in those offices not being considered "ordinary" local pilot offices. Hence, the CS office in Tirana no. 10 (and possibly no. 11?) has an urgent need for a backup unit.
- The Central Office was in March 2004 equipped with some computers, but no database tool – e.g. the Intech software used in local offices – has been installed. Hence, no central database has been established based on data from pilot offices. Assigning of ID numbers has started, but only for newborn since 1 January 2004. Unfortunately the assigning is already far behind, due to less efficient assigning routines. There may also be some conflict with the ISSH numbers that have already been assigned.
- It is very positive that the Central Office, in collaboration with the relevant local offices, is working to find out about - and remove - some 150 000 duplicates identified by CEC. These are cases where one single person is registered in two ore more (up to six) local offices.
- IT-personnel are said to be problematic to recruit, because of the low level of wages that can be offered.
- Since experience and continuity are very important in the establishing phase, the mission was not happy to learn that the employee with the longest experience in the Central Office has resigned. Similarly, it was disappointing to hear that some employees in local pilot offices have been dismissed by the new mayor elected after the local elections last year, regardless of their special training for this job.
- The team was pleased to learn that the Central office, the General Directory of Civil Status (GDCS), has got its own premises. However, one of SN's initial conditions for an effective project progress was that MLGD should provide adequate office space for the SN project staff within the same premises. This issue was not discussed during the visit.
- SN strongly supports the generous UNOPS offer to computerise the CS offices in Durrës and Shkodër, using new software from the University of Shkodër. This is an excellent opportunity to gain experience from working with different software and companies.
- SN welcomes the recent efforts plan to introduce a national address system in Albania. A modern and well functioning address system is a crucial part of a civil registration system, as well as for other administrative and statistical purposes.

Software and the upcoming international call for tender were subjects of high interest. An impression was that MLGD is still concerned about the "correct" choice of software for future, with less concern about that the system – independent of which system to be chosen – has to be filled with data, and that the data need to be cleaned to be of better quality. It should be pointed out that the solution for the central database of the pilot phase does not imply any choice of database solution for the future nation-wide system: The data in the database may be transferred from a preliminary system to any permanent system without problems. The "Nordic model" means a focus on data, data quality, of a central civil

registration (population) register, unique person identification and routines and processes around this. These issues are independent of a particular software solution.

The Valtech Axelboss PowerPoint presentation of the modernisation plan ("blueprint") was available to SN beforehand. It mainly describes the system, with very little focus on the data. The presentation is general, with few controversial items. Hence, some important facts were not mentioned, like the large number of duplicates and "multicates". In the blueprint itself the concept 'duplicate' was defined, but very unsatisfactory, comprising just those duplicates that are easy to find. According to the information received during the mission, the SN team finds the timetable of the nation-wide plan to be very compact and demanding, with very short lime limits. Anyway, as soon as the winner of the international tender is known, SN needs to know more about the plans, for the purpose of coordination.

The team also noticed a strong focus on the ID number. There seems to be some confusion about the difference between an ID number and linking keys in a certain database system, for example the primary key in the Intech database system. Some people seem to think that this primary key would bind up for the future ID numbers. However, every database system needs a unique identification of the records in the system, which is a feature of the Intech system.

The team was happy to get more information and documentation from Intech, including an electronic copy of the data model for the Intech software. This data model will be used for SN internal purposes only. Still the team is missing the specifications for the data model.

Because of recent experience with insufficient infrastructure within or near Tirana, an online-connection to a central database still seems to have to wait for the far future. However, in the meantime the data should flow regularly between the central office and the local offices.

Full computerisation of pilot CS offices and some others

During the meetings in Tirana the team mentioned several proposals for improving and speeding up the modernisation process, all of them being mentioned in the project document from MLGD for the second part of the pilot phase. However, there was no time for a thorough discussion of those issues.

One proposal would be to fully computerise the Civil Status Registries (CS offices) that have finished (or are close to finish) digitising the fundamental books (and the acts of births, deaths and marriages). By full computerisation is meant that the daily updating of the fundamental register with data on new births, deaths, marriages, divorces, moves from other CS offices, name changes, etc., is done using the computer only, and likewise that all new certificates are produced and printed by the computer, only to be checked, stamped and signed by the CS office employees. Currently several local offices do double work, manually on paper in the old way and to a limited extent using the computer (mainly as an index). This increases the workload of the local employees and prevents them from benefiting from the improved efficiency and accuracy of a computerised system.

Thus, SN proposes that these local CS offices abandon the entry of events into books but rely on computers only, except when older data are needed. If considered absolutely necessary, there could perhaps be a brief trial period of 1-2 months when the data are entered into books as well. The full computerisation is, of course, planned to be implemented some time in the future for all of Albania, but we think that it is very important to learn as much as possible from the experience of a limited number of offices. This will both increase the speed of the modernisation as well as reduce errors and problems during the modernisation process.

An additional advantage of the full computerisation would be a regular checking and cleaning of the data, because errors detected by the residents who come to collect their certificates may be corrected immediately in the computer.

SN would also like to emphasise the need for backup of the data that have been computerised in the CS offices. There are some offices where no backup has ever been taken, with a high risk of a serious loss if the computer is destroyed or stolen.

SN thinks that the transition to full computerisation of all functions of the CS offices should be done in *all* offices that have entered the fundamental registers, not only the five pilot offices funded by Norway. There are about twelve such offices altogether, comprising more than ½ million records (people). The implementation and testing of the computerised procedures will imply that the full modernisation of the remaining 400 offices in Albania can be done much faster and more efficiently, due to the lessons learned from the pilot phase.

Transfer to a central database
Our second proposal is that all local computerised fundamental registers (and also the acts of births, deaths and marriages) be transferred to the planned central database of the General Directory as soon as possible. (This may at this stage be done most easily by copying each local database to a CD.) These local databases should be merged to constitute a central civil status database. This database can be used for developing software and routines for checking and cleaning the data, including removal of duplicates, and transfer of data between local and central databases. Moreover, and not the least, routines may be developed for the handling of moves of residents between two local CS offices.

This process will also yield valuable experience that will contribute to a much faster modernisation of the CS system for all of Albania, with less risk of making serious mistakes. Moreover, the merging of CS databases for a dozen or so local offices will include the records for several hundred thousand persons and as such constitute a significant part of the future central CS database. Databases for additional local offices may be added as soon as they become ready.

Note that this will not exclude the possibility of using other software at a later stage. Data can be converted to any format through regular export options.

Next steps

During the meetings in Tirana the team discussed several proposals for improving and speeding up the modernisation process, all of them being mentioned in the project document from MLGD for the second part of the pilot phase. However, since there was no time for a thorough discussion of these issues, SN wrote a letter dated 23 June 2004 to the General Directory of Civil Status, att. Ms. Brizida Gjikondi, asking the Ministry's view on a number of issues.

The General Directory's reply of 19 July was brief and general, welcoming the continued Norwegian contribution to modernising the Albanian Civil Status Service. It also welcomed Mr. Børge Strand's stay in Tirana from about 1 September 2004 and confirmed the approval of the SNs plan of how to continue. However, hence some particular questions in the letter from SN were not answered:

- Does the Ministry have new priorities for the second part of the pilot phase (major changes would require approval by the MFA of Norway)?

- Will the General Directory of Civil Status instruct the dozen or so local CS offices where the fundamental registers have been entered, to fully computerise the operations of the offices as soon as possible? What would be the deadline for this and which offices would be instructed to do this?

- Will a central database in the General Directory be established, consisting of the available computerised fundamental registers, and if possible the acts of births, deaths and marriages? Again, when will this be done and which CS offices will be included initially?

- Is there a need for a protocol for the second part of the pilot phase to be signed by MLGD and Statistics Norway, similar to the protocol for the first part?

Annex 1. List of institutions and persons met during the mission

Ministry of Local Government and Decentralisation (MLGD)
Mr. Ben Blushi, Minister of LGD, bblushi@mpvd.gov.al
Ms. Brizida Gjikondi, General Directory of Civil Status Service (GDCS), Director of Department of National Register, now General Director of GDCS.
Mr. Saimir Laçej, Register Specialist, Department of National Register, Chief of Sector of System Management, saimirlacej@yahoo.com
Mr. Dorian Xhixho, IT Specialist, Department of National Register, Sector of Information Technology

Civil Status Office (CSO) of Administrative Unit no. 7, Tirana
Mr. Pandeli Sara, Mayor of unit no. 7
Mr. Ahmet Musta, Chief of CSO

Civil Status Office of Administrative Unit no. 10, Tirana
Ms. Margarita Musta, Chief of CSO

Civil Status Office of Preza
Ms. Sulltana Qehajaj

Central Election Committee (CEC)
Mr. Petrit Gjokutaj, Director of Voter's Register

Institute of Social Insurance (ISSH)
Mr. Ilir Beqja, General Director, issh@icc.al.eu.org

Central Statistical Institute (INSTAT)
Ms. Milva Ekonomi, General Director, mekonomi@instat.gov.al;

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)
Mr. Robert Adams, Head of Democratisation Department, Robert.Adams@osce.org,

EU Delegation, Tirana
Ms. Anna Ricciardi, Sector Manager, Democratic Stabilization, Anna.Ricciardi@cec.eu.int

International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES)
Mr. Dickson H. Bailey, Project Director, dbailey@ifesalbania.org

United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), Durrës
Ms. Silvia Fadda, Area Manager, Mobile 069 20 60302

Intech SHPK
Mr. Sokol Sinani, intech@icc-al.org
Ms. Ada Beqja, intech@icc-al.org

Norwegian Embassy
Ms. Mona Gunni Svendsen, Chargé d'Affaires, mona.gunni.svendsen@mfa.no

Modernisation of the Civil Status System in Albania - Contribution to a Pilot Project by Statistics Norway.

Report for the period 01 September 2004 to 31 August 2005

By Børge Strand and Mirela Talka

Introduction

The Norwegian Pilot Project for modernisation of the civil status service in Albania was launched in October 2001. The main objective for the Pilot Project is to gain experience for the nation-wide modernisation through a small-scale modernisation, i.e. computerisation of a limited number of Civil Status offices and establishing a central database for these offices in a Central Civil Status Unit. During the first part of the project five local Civil Status offices were chosen for modernisation: the offices of Kamez, Bathore, Preza, Klos and Tirana Administrative Unit number 7. These CS offices are later referred to as "the pilot offices". The full-scale modernisation of the civil status service was never intended to be fully funded by Norway.

The original plans and other relevant documents about the Pilot Project have been published in *"Selected documents on the Modernisation of the civil registration system in Albania, by Statistics Norway and the Albanian Ministry of Local Government and Decentralisation"*, in the series Documents 2004/2 – March 2004, Statistics Norway, later referred to as "Selected Documents".

Due to administrative requirements in Norway the Pilot Project was divided into two phases. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway granted 4.0 million NOK to Statistics Norway to cover activities for the first phase of the project (originally for the year 2001).

The application for funding the second phase of the Project was sent from the Albanian Ministry of Local Government and Decentralisation (MLGD) in June 2003. The application was approved in May 2004. The long time lag between application and approval was primarily due to a major reorganisation of Norway's development assistance. Details about this are found in the document *"Aide-Memoire from a mission in June 2004 by Statistics Norway to Ministry of Local Government and Decentralisation, Tirana to prepare the second part of the pilot phase of the modernisation of the civil registration system in Albania"*, 8 September 2004. Between June 2003 and September 2004 there was no long-term consultant from Statistics Norway in Tirana, but the local project co-ordinator took care of the continuity of the project.

Due to these issues we distinguish between the two phases, or parts, of the Pilot Project, with 1 September 2004 as the start of the second phase. There is a separate report for the first phase of the Pilot Project which covers the project history from the beginning in 2001 and until the end of August 2004 (*"Report on the first part of the pilot project: The Modernisation of the Civil Registration System in Albania". Ski/22.02.2005 Statistics Norway)*.

The present report covers the period from 1 September 2004 to 31 August 2005. For this part of the project a separate agreement was signed: *"Protocol between the Ministry of Local Government and Decentralisation, Albania and Statistics Norway, Norway, regarding Assistance on the Modernisation of the Civil Registration System in Albania" (*see Annex 1).

The name of the project was changed to the "Assistance Project" from 01 September 2004. For convenience the term "Assistance Project" (AP) is used in this report.

Mandate and guidelines for the Assistance Project (AP)

Because of the plans for a rapid full-scale modernisation made by Albanian authorities, with an international tender launched in August 2004, the plans for the AP had to be adjusted during the summer of 2004. The new situation required some adjustments of the Project Document - *"Modernisation of the Civil Registration System in Albania. Pilot Project, second part: 1 July 2003 – 31 December 2004"*, Tirana and Oslo, June 2003, and new guidelines were presented in a letter from Statistics Norway to The Director General of the General Directory of Civil Status (GDCS) of 22 June 2004. In this letter it was proposed not to establish more pilot offices, but instead focus more on:

- Strengthening and developing the GDCS.
- Qualifying GDCS staff.
- Procurement of necessary hardware and software for a central database in the GDCS.
- Establishing a central database by collecting, importing and appending data from local CS offices.
- Developing solutions for regular data updating and data exchange.
- Developing methods for improving data quality - for which the central database would be an important source.

In more general terms these objectives were incorporated in the new Protocol. They have been the general guidelines for the activities for the part of the project covered in this report, together with the basic ideas and visions from the original Project Document.

The international tender for a full-scale modernisation of the CS system for all of Albania, was annulled in November 2004, but at that time it was considered too late for yet another revision of the plans for the AP.

Summary of main project activities and results

The AP started in September 2004 by renewing the connection with the Albanian participants in the project: the GDCS, the pilot offices, and also the software provider (Intech+). We had meetings and other kinds of contact and made agreements about future activities.

A basic activity during the autumn 2004 was data collection from the pilot offices and also a few non-pilot local CS offices. Data were collected from eight local databases (of which one was not completely computerised). Altogether computerised data for 228 491 residents were collected from the seven fully computerised local offices during this period. A positive side effect of this data collection was that it also represented a security against loss of data, as we discovered weak or non-existent local backup routines.

We spent a lot of time becoming acquainted with the data as well as with the software used for data entry, in order to explore data quality and also in order to describe data and metadata in less technical terms. From the beginning this was done in good cooperation with the GDCS.

One important experience from the data collection process was that the export procedures were too complex, especially to be run by the staff at the local offices. That is why we proposed to develop a separate functionality for data exchange between local and central databases with a more user-friendly interface. This functionality was developed by the Intech+ company during January – February 2005, and was first tested on a real CS database (from Klos) in June 2005.

On the initiative of the Minister of Local Government and Decentralisation, Ben Blushi, a National Conference on Civil Status was arranged in Elbasan, 14.01.2005. The AP was invited to participate, and on request from the Minister, the Norwegian project was presented at the conference by Mirela Talka and Børge Strand. Participants on the conference were mayors from most of Albania,

representatives from central Albanian authorities and institutions, as well as representatives from international organisations.

Unfortunately, by the turn of the year our counterpart (GDCS) became more and more occupied with other duties, because they were given the over-all responsibility for the voters' lists for the coming national election (3 July 2005). The priorities for the GDCS were set directly by the Ministry, based on Article 55 of the new Electoral Code No. 9341, dated 10.01.05. Accordingly the GDCS was very little involved with the AP for a long time. For the AP this was an unfortunate situation, and we had to work hard for having more resources allocated to our counterpart, and to involve them more in the project. Finally the GDCS received an additional IT specialist and by the beginning of April two (out of three) director positions which had long been vacant, were filled.

More substantial results were reached gradually from March and onwards. The GDCS was strengthened in many ways: The technical infrastructure was strongly improved with a server, additional workstations, software licenses and Internet connection funded by the AP. (In the meantime OSCE financed a local area network and a separate server for the voters' lists database). The main purpose of these investments was to establish the infrastructure for a central database for the population register. The final part of this was loading data from the local CS offices into the central database. This job was finished on 27 May 2005, and a major milestone was reached.

Furthermore, the AP contributed to improve the qualifications of the IT specialists in the GDCS. In April 2005 five IT specialists from GDCS made a study visit to Norway where they were given special training in SQL at Statistics Norway. The AP also financed training for the IT staff locally, more precisely, one week of basic Oracle training carried out at the end of March, 2005.

During July 2005 the AP supported and financed the construction of a permanent "Training unit" within the premises of GDCS. The intention is to establish infrastructure for in-company training (mainly IT) of CS employees from all over the country.

It is also worth mentioning that the AP from time to time was consulted by other organisations, projects and groups that both wanted advice and to hear about our experience, e.g. OSCE, IOM, the EU Commission and others.

Staff and organisation of the Assistance Project

The Tirana-based staff of the AP in the period covered by this report has been Mirela Talka and Børge Strand. Mirela Talka was engaged as project co-ordinator in November 2001, while Børge Strand was engaged as project leader for the period 1 September 2004 to 31 August 2005.

Initially, it was the intention that the project staff should have their offices within the premises of the GDCS. However, since the GDCS did not have any premises of their own before February 2004, the AP hired its own offices in 2002. When the second part of the AP started in September 2004, the intention was still to move to the GDCS offices, but at that time we realised there would be no space available as the full-scale modernisation was to start soon with an expected increase of the GDCS staff (cf. the tender plans below). Therefore we decided to extend the lease contract for our existing premises to August 2005. By June 2005 we extended the lease contract by six more months from September 2005, mainly because at that time we realised that the GDCS would need all their office capacity themselves.

The AP has had good physical working conditions, and the circumstance of not sharing office facilities with the GDCS has not had any negative effect for our cooperation. The AP has been equipped with all software and hardware needed for the data processing in question. We have also

upgraded some of our equipment in the period. But as for the rest of Tirana, the AP has had its fair share of power-cuts!

For the first part of the pilot project there was a reference group appointed by the MLGD. For the second part (the AP) it was not considered necessary or useful to appoint a new local reference group. However, a support group in Statistics Norway consisting of Johan-Kristian Tønder, Helge Brunborg, Stein Opdahl, Halvard Skiri and (partly) Bjørn K. Wold, has been active since the project started. Besides backstopping in Statistics Norway for special issues has been done by Torgeir Vik (IT issues), Helge Brunborg and Halvard Skiri (other issues).

Meetings with the support group, either on telephone or in the premises of Statistics Norway in Oslo, have been carried out every two weeks, with some exceptions. Børge Strand has prepared a short status description in advance of each of the meetings, and Stein Opdahl has written minutes from the meetings.

One requirement in the donor letter (dated 10.05.2004) from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign affairs (MFA) was to arrange a mid-term meeting between the MFA and Statistics Norway. This meeting took place in the premises of MFA in Oslo on 9 May 2005. Before this meeting, the project leader Børge Strand prepared a status report for the period of 01 Sep 2004 - 30 April 2005, and Stein Opdahl prepared a report on the accounts. The status and the results for the AP was presented and discussed. Another main issue on the meeting was the future of the project. It was decided that the project should continue for another 12 months from 1 September 2005. The MFA also stated the need for an external mid-term review of the project. This will be done in October 2005 by two foreign experts.

Albanian plans for a nation-wide modernisation of the Civil Status Service

The Norwegian project plans have all the time pointed to the final vision: a nation-wide modernisation of the Albanian Civil Status Service. But the plans have also been very clear about the sequence of activities: The objective of the pilot project was to gain experience for the full-scale modernisation. Thus the pilot must logically be completed before the final part. Nevertheless, Albanian initiatives and proposals to start and complete the modernisation of the rest of the country have been launched during the project period. In general, these plans affected the situation for the AP by creating a certain unpredictability.

International tender
During a mission to Albania in June 2004 a team from Statistics Norway learned about the plans for the full-scale modernisation of the Civil Status Service and an upcoming international tender. These plans were consistent with the vision described in the original project proposal from Statistics Norway. But the timing was not congruent with the purpose of the Pilot Project as a way to gain experience for the full-scale project.

Details about the tender are found in the document: *"Bid Documents. Computerisation of the Albanian Civil Status service and building capacities on realisation of ID cards*", Republic of Albania, Ministry of Local Government and Decentralisation 2004, later referred to as "Bid Documents", and in the memo *"The Valtech Axelboss document on modernisation of the Civil Registration in Albania – a summary with comments"* (Børge Strand, 29.06.2004, Statistics Norway). In the Bid Documents the question of how to deal with duplicates is dealt with in a separate paragraph where criteria for duplicate identification are listed, see the section on "Experience from data collection from local CS offices".
The tender had a closing date for bids settled to 23.08.2004. There were several bidders, both international and national. However, the tender was annulled in the beginning of November 2004 "due to irregularities", but no more information about this decision was given.

The tender plans clearly affected negatively the situation and the plans for the AP – both when the tender was launched, and later when it was annulled.

Concession for Civil Status Service
In January 2005 another plan was launched. This was based on a special concept in the Albanian legislation called "Concession". This is a regulation of out-sourcing, or privatisation, of some Government services in general, but also about what kind of duties that may be the object of concession.

In February 2005, the Albanian Parliament approved an amendment to Law No. 7973, dated 26.07.1995, "For the Concession and participation of the private sector in public services and infrastructure", which would allow a private company to be a concessionary company in some branches of the public sector.

The concession issue was brought one step forward through a decision by the Council of Ministers of 6 May 2005. According to this decision, the CS Service was defined as a service object of concession. The MLGD and the Ministry of Economy are authorised to adopt the relevant procedures.

We learned about this mainly from the news, but had more information from the General Secretary of MLGD, in a meeting on 18 February 2005. According to the General Secretary the plans might possibly be realised towards the end of 2005, but the Civil Status Service itself would still remain public, however. The private company in this case would be expected to make its profits from selling ID cards.

Our counterpart - the General Directory of Civil Service

The General Directory of Civil Service (the GDCS) was established in February /March 2002 with the appointment of a General Director in May 2002. The GDCS is organisationally placed under the Ministry of Local Government and Decentralisation (the MLGD). For more information about the structure of the GDCS, we refer to "Selected Documents – 2004/2", Annex 3, pt. 9.1. The GDCS has been the main counterpart for the AP during the period covered by this report.

Three directors constitute the top management of the General Directory. The top executive is the "General Director for the GDCS", supported by the "Director for Department for Methods and Inspection" and the "Director for Department of National Register". Three directors left their positions during 2004: the "Director for the Department of National Register" (in June), the "General Director" and the "Director for Department for Methods and Inspection" (both in November). Unfortunately, there was no immediate replacement for any of them. On the contrary - for a long time all these positions were vacant. This was a serious difficulty for the AP as no director could defend the position and the priorities for the project towards the Ministry. In particular, this was a drawback from December 2004 and onwards, when the GDCS staff was put under pressure for delivering services for the voters' lists etc. in preparation of the parliamentary election (03.07.2005). The major resource-demanding task for the GDCS was connected with preparations for the election in 2005 (electoral lists mainly). Priorities for the GDCS were given directly by the MLGD, and the co-operation between the GDCS and the AP suffered by this situation.

At the end of January 2005 a new "Director for Department for Methods and Inspection" was appointed. This was a step forward but the two other director positions remained vacant. On several occasions (February – March 2005) in meetings with MLGD representatives, including also a meeting with Minister Blushi, we asked about their plans for filling these positions, and (in short) we were explained that this process would take time. Finally, in the beginning of April a new director was

appointed for "Department of National Register". The position as "General Director for the GDCS" is still vacant (by 01.09.2005).

Another problem has been the lack of staff in the GDCS, especially IT specialists, to work on the Assistance Project. As a matter of fact, only one employee at the GDCS was dedicated to the project from the beginning, and at times even this employee had to prioritise other tasks. This was not due to lack of will in the GDCS, but to many political interest groups requesting services from GDCS at the same time.

During this period the AP staff tried in several ways to involve GDCS more. On 18 February we had a meeting with the newly appointed director for "The Department for Methods and Inspection" and the Secretary General of the MLGD, where we discussed these issues. We expressed the strong need for more resources and more involvement from the GDCS. An additional IT specialist was engaged in the GDCS after this, and this may perhaps be regarded as a result of our request.

On 3 March 2005 the AP had a meeting with the Chief of Cabinet and the Secretary General of the MLGD, where we discussed the same issues. On 8 March 2005 we finally had a meeting with the Minister of Local Government and Decentralisation, Mr. Ben Blushi. On that occasion we gave the Minister a briefing about the status for the project, what was achieved so far, and our immediate plans for both investments and training of the staff. We repeated our request for more involvement from the GDCS, which he fully understood. He promised to appoint a contact person in the GDCS as co-ordinator for the project. Blushi also expressed his gratitude for the contribution from Statistics Norway, which he regarded as very important. But he also explained that in the present situation resources were urgently needed for the preparations for the election.

By the end of March 2005 we finally noticed some progress – both in terms of additional employees, a new leadership in the GDCS, and also in terms of a strengthened technological infrastructure in the GDCS.

Strengthening the GDCS

The main objective for the AP in the second part was to "strengthen the GDCS", cf. the Protocol, Article 1 - part 4. Several initiatives were taken to fulfil this objective. SN has given support in various ways and on various tasks, like data collection from the pilot offices, converting data for the central database, etc. These tasks are described in details below.

The GDCS has a limited staff of IT specialists, most of the time four persons, while a new IT specialist was transferred from the MLGD in February 2005. As mentioned above only one staff member was dedicated to the Assistant Project initially. (The remaining specialists have most of the time been occupied with an old database from the Central Election Commission (CEC), i.e. mainly duplicate cleaning, and later with the voters' lists for the 2005 election).

Study visit to Statistics Norway for IT specialists

One item in the plans for the AP was from the very beginning a study visit to Statistics Norway to train IT specialists from the GDCS. This visit was carried out from 4 to 8 April 2005. The participants were five IT specialists from the GDCS accompanied by the Norwegian project leader, Børge Strand. The main objective for the study visit was SQL training. Three of the days were allocated to this. The computer training took place in the premises of Statistics Norway in Kongsvinger. There was also a visit to the local Civil Service office in Kongsvinger and a guided tour of Statistics Norway, Kongsvinger, with a focus on "Information technology in Statistics Norway". All participants from Albania expressed great interest in this subject. We also had an introduction on how Civil Status data are used for statistical purposes by Statistics Norway.
Finally, we had a session about in-company training in Statistics Norway – how it is organised and implemented. This was considered very relevant for the GDCS plans to establish an in-house training

unit. The Albanian participants expressed afterwards that the training had been very good and useful for all of them.

Sponsored basic Oracle training
In March 2005 the AP also sponsored basic Oracle training for GDCS employees with € 3 000. This amount covered five days of training for four employees from the GDCS. This training was carried out by a specialist from the local company Intech+ and took place right before the Oracle installation at GDCS. It was considered very good and useful by the participants from the GDCS.

Through these two measures the AP contributed significantly to improve the qualifications of the IT specialists in the GDCS.

Proposed study visit for Civil Status specialists
A second study visit to Norway was planned to take place in June 2005, but due to extreme time constraint for the GDCS staff in May – June 2005, it was decided to postpone this visit till after the vacation. The study visit took place in September 2005.

The main subject for the second study visit was to study civil status service in Norway.

Procurement of hardware and software for a central database

When part two of the AP started, some major issues to be dealt with were:

- Data were only stored in local databases – there was no central storage.
- There was no software or hardware for a national database in the GDCS.
- There was no "easy way" to extract data from the local databases for transfer to a central database.
- There was no functionality in existing systems for extracting and exchanging only the regularly updated data from the local CS offices databases to a central database

The technical solution for all these issues, including establishing a central database, was intentionally to be developed by the winner of the international tender. While the tender process was ongoing, any alternative development stopped, for obvious reasons. When the tender was annulled, the situation was in many ways back to start.

Nevertheless, we decided that the AP should start on a small scale with data collection etc. to fulfil our project objectives. For that purpose we needed the data from the pilot offices (also from other local CS offices which had been computerised), and we needed a database in the GDCS to receive and store these data. Another reason for having a central database was, of course, that this would be the main instrument for various quality checks.

We recognise that the system developed by the AP for the central database, most likely will be replaced by a new system in the future. However a lot of investments and contributions from SN will remain permanent: the AP has contributed by building infrastructure in the GDCS and in the pilot offices, organisational development both locally and centrally, a more qualified staff and finally the data, which can be exported from the existing system and imported into the permanent, future system. After all - information about a large number of citizens have been computerised during the first part of the AP, and also through other data entry projects.
The GDCS initially wanted to develop their own preliminary solution for the central register, but this would be both time-consuming and expensive. A natural choice for the central database was to use the same system that was installed in the pilot offices. This application (running on an Oracle platform) was developed by the local company Intech+, mainly for data entry at the local CS offices. (But as long as the tender was going on, this was not possible, because Intech+ was among the bidders).

When the tender was annulled, we decided together with the MLGD and the GDCS, to use a version of the Intech+ software as a central database. (The application is named "Inhabreg".) This decision triggered a number of investments in the GDCS - funded by the AP. For this purpose the GDCS had to be equipped with a server, licenses for software (Oracle Standard Edition and PL/SQL), a few more workstations, and the Intech+ application itself.

In the beginning of March 2005 the following objectives were outlined:

- Procurement and installation of a server and the needed workstations in the GDCS.
- Procurement and installation of Oracle licenses (Standard Edition).
- Procurement and installation of PL/SQL licenses.
- Intech+ software ("Inhabreg") installation.
- Loading data from seven local CS offices into the central database.

The server and the additional equipment were delivered during the first days of April 2005, and the equipment was distributed and installed the following days. At the same time the OSCE also equipped the GDCS with a server (for the voters' lists database).

From the middle of April 2005 a lot of construction activity took place in the premises of the GDSC. The work was finished during the first week of May.

Finally, Intech+ completed the installation of software and loaded the dump files from the local CS offices into the Central Database. Thus, a major milestone was reached by the end of May. Loading the data from the local offices was not carried out without problems. The experiences from this process are explained in more detail below.

Other investments

In December 2004 the GDCS proposed some investments for strengthening their organisation. For these investments they asked for financial support form the AP investment budget. The proposals were discussed with the support group in Oslo in January 2005, and the proposal was approved.

Improving communication network.

The GDCS needed investments for an internal communications network, including access to Internet. This investment would improve internal communication e.g. through e-mail, and also improve the utility of shared facilities like peripheral equipment etc. Above all this would facilitate the communication between GDCS and the Albanian consular services, in embassies all over the world, since these offices are part of the CSS and store important data.

However, by April 2005 the local area network was ordered and paid for by the OSCE since this was also urgently needed for the work with the electoral lists. The AP instead supported the GDCS with Internet access which was operational from the end of April. This also made it possible for the GDCS to create a web-site for the voters' lists.

Building a "Training Unit" in the GDCS

A main idea from the GDCS was that the proposed training unit would be a permanent centre within the GDCS. The need for training of employees in the CS offices is unquestionable. There are about 600 civil status service employees in CS offices across the country, who are in great need of basic computer training. According to the GDCS plans this unit would also serve as a long-term solution for any other training needed within the GDCS, employees from local CS offices, operators and specialists. For the training centre in particular, the GDCS was asked to work out a plan for its use, and to give priority to training employees from the pilot offices when the installation is ready. During July 2005 the AP financed the required IT equipment for this unit.

Experience from the data entry process in the pilot offices

The data entry process mainly took place in the first part of the pilot project and more details about the experience from the data entry process in the pilot offices are presented in the following document, *"Report on the first part of the pilot project: The Modernisation of the Civil Registration System in Albania". (Ski/22.02.2005 Statistics Norway)* which is included in this publication.

Software for data entry has been the same for all the pilot offices, the application "Inhabreg" mentioned above.

Information about other data entry projects and other actors can be found in chapter 4.13, page 21, in "Selected Documents – 2004/2". For some of these projects different software was used for data entry, but the "Inhabreg" from Intech+ was also used for the majority of these.

During the period covered by this report, the AP has only had the opportunity to see one system different from the Intech system. The AP staff together with a representative from the GDCS, made a visit to the CS office in Korcë where there is an SQL based system. Unfortunately we were prevented from closer studies of this. However, this seemed to be a very simplified system (compared to the Intech+ application), containing the fields from the Fundamental Register, but not the same additional fields that are included in the Intech system. In principle, GDCS should be able to handle exports from different platforms and systems, but this seems to be more and more unlikely as other systems for data entry are no more in regular use. Apart from the AP and its pilot offices all other CS data entry projects are more or less dead by summer 2005.

In general, from the beginning of December 2004 all local CS offices have been fully occupied with preparations for the election 2005. No further data entry from CS protocols or updating has been possible to recommence, though we have urged the GDCS to give the necessary orders. We realised that the situation most likely would remain like this until after the election. Since December 2004 all changes and updates have again only been done in the manual system. This has, of course, created an increasing gap between computerised data and the data in the manual system.

At the end of May 2005 all infrastructure was ready for trying the "real" modernisation – at least on a small scale: data exchange of updates only between the pilot offices and the GDCS. But it was not possible to start updating of the local CS databases until the election was over.

Experience from data collection from local CS offices

In meetings between the AP and the GDCS staff in the beginning of September 2004 we outlined the following agreement as a starting point: On behalf of the GDCS the AP will collect data from the pilot offices in order to transfer the data to the GDCS. The GDCS only wanted the main table from each of the offices at this stage of the project. Furthermore, the GDCS wanted the main table as a CSV file from each of the pilot offices.

The AP was asked to assist in the process of appending the data and the quality testing, which we did. The AP created the CSV files, as well as an appended version of the main tables, both as a CSV and a fixed format file. We also copied the dump files to CD's and handed them to the GDCS.

Although the dump files are not backups in the real sense of the word, they are nevertheless a copy of each of the local databases, and as such a security against loss of data. As backup routines in general are weak at the local CS offices, the dump files can be crucial. Centrally stored data are secured through regular backup routines in the GDCS.

While the tender was ongoing, the GDCS did not want any contact with any of the companies that participated in the tender (in plain text: Intech+). Hence, the AP acted as an intermediate between the GDCS and Intech+ in this period.

Table 1. Data collected from local CS offices

CS Office	Date of export	Number of records in main table
Preza	16.09.2004	6 094
Tirana no. 7	29.09.2004	52 497
Kamez	05.10.2004	38 984
Bathore	07.10.2004	21 549
Tirana no. 10	17.11.2004	26 405
Tirana no. 11	18.11.2004	52 035
Pogradec	25.11.2004	30 927
Total		228 491

The data collection activities mainly took part from September and throughout November 2004. We included also collection from a few non-pilot offices. One of the pilot offices, in the municipality of Klos, was included in the original plans for data collection. We had to postpone our visit to Klos several times, because data entry was not finished. However, we made a visit to Klos on 1 June 2005 even if the data entry was not completed. In Klos the export procedure failed because of hardware problems. We had to bring the computer to the Intech+ specialists in Tirana for a recovery procedure. The problem was fixed, and a dump of the database from Klos was created on 2 June. Since this database does not cover the total population in Klos, it is not included in the table above. (The number of records in the main table from Klos is 4726).

Data collection from the pilot offices was done by the AP staff, while collection from non-pilot offices was done by a representative from the GDCS accompanied by the AP.

When we started the data collection in September 2004, this had never been attempted previously. The method was to create an Oracle dump from each local database. In each case this is a copy of the *entire* database, including both data and metadata, and with the status at that particular date. Each dump file was then transferred to a CD, and stored in the GDCS premises. These dump files were finally loaded into the Central Database at the GDCS as mentioned above.

Apart from the problem in Klos, we did not meet any serious problems during data collection, but the collection was a quite resource-demanding process as we had to visit each of the local CS offices and physically collect the data. Sometimes we met unforeseen problems – either of a technical character or other kinds of problems. A common problem was power supply. Sometimes we could not collect data as planned because of power cuts when we arrived the local office, and we were either forced to wait or try again some other day. We always contacted the local offices in advance of our visits, and also asked if the needed technical equipment was present (CD burner). In one case we had to install the CD burner before we could complete our task. Given the lack of infrastructure for more advanced transfer of data, only physical transfer (on CD or other media) seems realistic for a long time ahead.

The data collection described above must be considered as a one-time operation: It is only the first time that a copy of the entire database is needed. Future data transfer from local offices to the GDCS, and between the local CS offices, should only comprise updates and changes made since the first dump. The regularity in this is of course an important issue. Ideally, a transfer from a local to the

central database should be done on a daily basis, but that is not realistic for the time being, cf. comments above. One objective for the continuation of the AP should be to develop regular routines and find a realistic frequency for data exchange.

The original Oracle export procedure was too complex – both in general, and for the local CS staff in particular – and had to be simplified to facilitate regular transfer of updates. What was needed was a functionality that could be operated locally and only extracting updates from local databases. Requirements for such functionality were presented to Intech+ in December 2004, which developed software for this functionality during January and February 2005.

Experience from investigating the data

According to an agreement with GDCS, we kept a copy of each dump file in the AP premises. In order to get acquainted with the data as well as with the software, we spent some time investigating the data. During December and January we loaded (imported) the dump files into an Oracle data base. By means of PL/SQL we could access the database, view both the data and the metadata, run queries and export single tables. We concentrated our investigation on the main table, which we exported and transferred to a systems-independent format (TXT, CSV and others). The seven main tables (apart from the database from Klos) were then appended to one table. Several CSV-files for the GDCS were also created through this process.

The results described below are based on the appended version of the main table from the seven local bases in question (228 491 records). The software used for analysing the data was mainly SAS (Statistical Analysis System).

The Intech+ system (Inhabreg) consists of nearly 60 tables. There is one main table and a number of auxiliary tables, code explanations, link tables, etc. Below each of the fields in the main table there is a description and a comment about the contents. For more details – see annex 2.

The main table reflects the left-hand side of the main page of the Fundamental Register (FR): each column from the FR is found as a column/field in the main table. In addition, the main table contains fields that are not to be found in the FR – mainly fields that are generated by the system.

Field number 1. Primary key (PK)
The primary key (PK) is generated by the system. The PK is composed of the following variables in the main table:

- Code for the commune/municipality of the local CS office (cf. field number 3)
- Last 3 digits of the year of birth (taken from field number 16)
- Month of birth
- Date of birth and sex (male: 1 .. 31; female: 51 .. 81)
- Sequential number for persons born on the same date
- Check digit using module 97

The code for commune/municipality of the local CS office was initially a unique code as there would only be one CS office in each commune/municipality. Due to administrative decisions, however, some ”virtual CS offices” (with separate databases) were created as subdivisions within the same commune/municipality. (This condition was unknown when the PK was designed). The subdivisions did not get their own unique code, but kept the same commune/municipality number as their “mother-office”. Hence the code for commune/municipality is unique only within each separate (local) database. This means that when tables from different local databases are appended, the PK can be duplicated, which we confirmed through SAS duplicate check. This created problems when the dump files were loaded into the Central Database, see below.

The PK must not be confused with the future personal ID number as defined in "Law No. 8951, dated 10.10.2002, On the Identity Number of Citizens", Article 2. The PK in the "Inhabreg" is only an identifier for records entered into this database, and does not prevent duplicates from being entered. If the same person is entered twice, the system would generate two different PKs. (There is however, a duplication control of names and a few other criteria in the system).

We also checked the PK for format errors. Since the date of birth (cf. field number 16, below) is part of the PK, any format errors in date of birth, will result in an invalid PK (one digit missing and one digit appearing as a non-numeric character). We discovered a few examples of records with an illegal format of date of birth, the same type of error occurring in all the seven CS offices.

The main conclusion is that a validation rule must be applied to avoid that dates with illegal formats are accepted by the system. By June 2005 the system provider has taken measures to prevent illegal date formats.

Field number 2. Year for creation of the fundamental register
This is always 1974, due to a new law on civil status of that year. Only data from 1974 and forwards are computerised. A control on the appended main table showed no other value than '1974' in this field.

Field number 3. Code for commune/municipality
This is a code for the commune/municipality where the local office is located. The number has four digits. This is the link to a separate code table with name of the commune/municipality. Otherwise – note the remarks connected to field number one. The data type for this field is character.

Field number 4. Code for local CS office
This is a code for the local CS office within the commune/municipality. The name is available in a separate table. In an appended data table this field must be used in combination with field number 3 for identification. See also comments to the PK.

Field number 5. Code for street of local CS office
This is a code for the street where the local office is located. There is a code table, but as far as we can see, the code table is far from complete in terms of contents. This relates to the general problem of the lack of address systems for Albania.

Field number 6. Code for book of fundamental register
This is a code for each book of the fundamental register in the local CS office. Each book has a unique number, or another type of identification like a name or a combination of letters. The data type is therefore defined as a "varchar2(8)" to allow character strings to be entered. It should be considered to standardise the identifier for the fundamental register.

Of the total number of records for this field the character string "LARGIME" is found in 663 records in this field. The meaning of this expression is that the person has moved. This string mainly appears in Tirana administrative unit number 10, and seems to be a local solution for a problem which otherwise is too complex to handle by the system. It may be better to use the comments field (number 27) in the main table to avoid illegal values in field number 6. The GDCS should make a decision about this and give instructions both to the CS office employees and the software provider for validation rules.

See also **Annex 5. Address table** of the "Inhabreg", for comments on the address table and change of residence.

Field number 7. Page number in the fundamental register book
This is a reference to the page number in each book of the fundamental register. The number of pages is always 100. We have not found any higher values in the field.

Field number 8. Row number in page of book
For each page in the book this refers to the row number on the page where a person is registered. The number of rows on one page is always 23.

Field number 9. First name
This field contains the first name of each individual. According to Albanian law only one first name is allowed. The field may be used for duplicate identification.

Field number 10. Family name
The family name of each resident is entered in this field. In the FR the first name and the family name are written in the same column. The field may be used for duplicate identification, together with other fields, see below.

Field number 11. Father's name
This is the father's name of each resident. The field may be used for duplicate identification.

Field number 12. Mother's name
This is the mother's name of each resident. The field may be used for duplicate identification.

Field number 13. Code for gender
Valid entry in the field is either F or M, and a control showed no other values.

Gender is not part of the suggested fields for duplicate identification in the "Bid Document" for the tender. From the AP point of view, this field would be an interesting additional field to distinguish otherwise identical records.

Field number 14. Code for family relation
This is a code for family relation. The explanation is given in a separate table. The code values are '01' – '22' corresponding to the same field as in the FR. No invalid or missing values have been detected. The main code is "head of family" ("kryefamiliar"), and all other codes indicate which relation each other member of the family has to the "head of family". There is a wide spectre of relations: "son", "daughter", "wife" and more complex relations such as "aunt on father's side", "aunt on mother's side", "son in law" and "daughter in law". It is acknowledged by the Civil Status authorities that correct "family relation" is difficult to maintain in the manual system.

It is important to note that the concept of "family" in the manual system (FR), as well as in the Law on Civil Status, 10.10.2002, (article 12), is not identical to the international concept "family nucleus", which consists of couples with or without children, only implying two generations as a maximum.
In the Albanian society the "family" concept corresponds more to the international concept of "household", including all the persons who occupy a housing or an address unit, share a common economy, and live in multiple relations, which may consist of one or more nuclear families. There is no equivalent to the term "household" in the Albanian language.
For comparison, in the Norwegian population registration system the family number links the members of a family nucleus, which may consist of spouses and (possibly) unmarried children, or a single person with unmarried children registered as living on the same address. The family number is the ID number of the reference person in the family nucleus (normally the husband, the father or possibly the mother), which is repeated for each member of the family nucleus. In addition each member of the family nucleus has a personal code which indicates whether the person is a "reference person", "spouse" or "child" (the code values are either 1, 2 or 3).

The traditional family and household structure in the Albanian society is reflected in the C.S. system and also in the Law on Civil Status. Because of the legislation this structure had to be transferred to the computerised system, and the family number is issued to all the members of the household, i.e. all those who occupy the same housing unit.

With the existing system, merging or splitting of families requires an extended update of codes for family relationship. It should be possible to report a change of residence without having to change codes for a huge number of people. However, this problem must be discussed and dealt with politically, as it requires a change of the law.

For a modern database system, the entity should be the individual, and the family concept should be the nuclear family of one or two generations. The family number should be issued to the reference person in the family nucleus in stead. Splitting or merging of families should only affect the nuclear family.

If desirable, technical solutions could be developed to keep the existing structure together with the family nucleous as proposed above. Anyway, most of the information about the family relations from the manual system would still be taken care of in the database system with the individual as the entity:

- Each resident of Albania will have a unique personal ID number.
- Each resident will also have a family number, which shows which family core every individual belongs to. Through a historical tracking of family numbers, the family origin may be traced in the future.
- Gender is defined through the ID number, i.e. element 3-4 in the ID number.
- The matrimonial status is defined through the code for matrimonial status.
- The address code (cf. annex 4) will show who actually lives together – i.e. the household – which may consist of one or more nuclear families.

Field number 15. Family number
Technically this corresponds to the PK in the "Inhabreg", and any technical problems with this field would be the same as for field number 1.

The PK for the "head of family" is repeated for members of the same family group, or household, cf. comments to the previous field. As a consequence of the definition of the "head of family", the family number does not reflect the family nucleus, which is the case with the Norwegian 'family number", e.g.

Field number 16. Date of birth
Date of birth is entered in a date format. The system is instructed to use the date format which is set for Windows on the computer ("Regional options"). The default setting according to the software provider should be "English (United Kingdom)".

In various local databases we discovered that the date format was not uniform. Problems occurred when the settings were changed locally, which affected the date format in the database, and consequently the date format in the dump files. This may cause problems when loading data into the central database.

For the future the GDCS should give clear instructions to the software providers and the local offices about a standard date format. Unauthorised changes of the format should not be possible. An alternative and perhaps safer way of doing this would, however, be to specify the data format in the programmes that read the data in these columns.

The field “date of birth” is included in the duplicate criteria. Having correct format and valid values in the field “date of birth” is important before duplicate checks are run.

There were also a number of logically wrong dates (e.g. year of birth = 1030), or suspiciously wrong dates, especially year of birth. See also comments to field number 1, as the PK is influenced by errors in the year of birth.

It would be easy to add a check to the system not to accept any year of birth lower than a given limit. Anyway, it is the responsibility of GDCS to define such a limit and instruct the software provider(s) to add the needed validation rules to the system.

Field number 17. Date of birth in spelling
This is the date of birth in spelling. Actually this is a parallel to the FR where date of birth is repeated in writing in a separate column. But in the database this field is generated by the system based on the date in field number 16, which means that an error in the date (as a date format) is automatically repeated in spelling. Accordingly this field is useless for control purposes. The field should be omitted from a future system.

Field number 18. Code for city or place of birth
The field indicates city or place of birth within a district (which is an official administrative unit in Albania). The code corresponds to the two first digits in field number 19. There is a link to a code table. Code is ‘00’ for residents born abroad. The contents are transferred from the Act of birth table.

The bid document lists “place of birth” as one of the duplicate criteria. This must include both field number 18 and field number 19, because field number 18 is only unique within each district and field number 19 is empty for those born abroad.

This field is a part of the duplicate criteria and must be used in combination with field number 19 during duplicate identification.

Field number 19. Code for district of birth
Code for the district of the city of birth. The field is empty when a residents is born abroad, cf. field no. 20. This field is also a part of the duplicate criteria and must be used in combination with field number 18 during duplicate identification.

Field number 20. Name of place born abroad
Data are entered only for people born abroad. The name of the place of birth is written in full - there is no code system. The field is not in the FR, but transferred to the main table from the act of birth table. For the future a code system would be advisable.

Field number 21. Citizenship
In the FR there is one column for nationality and one column for citizenship. In the table only citizenship is entered.

Field number 22. Code for matrimonial status
Legal values are 1,2,3,4, which are explained in a code table. No invalid or missing values have been found in the field.

Field number 23. Family name of spouse
Family name for females prior to marriage (maiden name).

Field number 24. Code for religion
This table is linked to a separate code table with codes '01'(catholic), '02' (orthodox) and '03 (muslim). This field is not much in use. Only 22 rows of a total of 228 491 contains a value (all within legal range)!

However, religion is not a component of the Civil Status for the residents, cf. the Law on the Civil Status, Ch. II, Article 8. (The field was added to the system for possible use for the 2000 census).

Field number 25. Date of death
This field is not in the FR, but is transferred to the main table from the Act of death table. The field is not open for data entry from the main table interface.

The format problem is probably the same as for field number 16 (date of birth) and should be solved in the same way. This field is rarely used, so we have not had the same opportunity to evaluate this. What we have seen quite clearly, is that the field is empty when a date definitely would be expected, e.g. records where year of birth is well before 1900.

This is probably a reflection of the legal regulations for death certificates and not a computer problem. There is a general reporting problem, which needs to be solved through legislation and improved practice. One suggested technical solution is to create a new table in the system where date of death can be entered manually. If this is done, date of death from this new table may not be used for issuing certificates, but the information would be very useful for several technical purposes.

Every person born before 1900 should be checked for date of death. If the date of death is missing in obvious cases, this must be clarified with the CS office.

Field number 26. Passport number
This field is not yet in use. In reality this is space allocated for the future ID number. The field is temporarily called "passport number". Probably the ID number will also be used as the passport number.

The field should be empty, and mainly it is. We have found four records with meaningless digits – most likely entered by accident. We see no problems connected to simply deleting this content.

Field number 27. Comments
This is space allocated for individual comments from the operator. The experience is, however, that the field is rarely used. Actually, a more frequent use of this field would have been desirable. If this field is to be kept and used in the future, there should also be a clear instruction to the operators about how and when to use it. The field is not useful for automatic control purposes.

Field 28. Operator
A code which identifies the operator who has entered or changed the data.

Field number 29. Date and time for entry or change
Date and time for any change is generated and registered automatically. Fields number 28 and 29 together make all changes traceable, and thus create a certain security against manipulation of the information.

Experience from loading the dump files

The operation of loading data from the seven local CS offices into the central database was done by Intech+. In short, this was done in a step-by-step procedure: Each local dump file was imported to an Oracle database, and then the local databases were imported one by one, and table by table, to a new

central database. The process represented a lot of manual work. And as suspected – during this process some errors, which violated constraints in the system, had to be corrected to allow import. Thus the whole process took a few days.

One of the problems was connected to the field "code for commune/municipality" (cf. field no 3 below). This number is a substring of the PK. The problem was that some local offices have the same ID number, which created duplication of the PK. This was the case for Tirana administrative units number 7, 10 and 11, and also for the local offices of Kamez and Bathore, which also have the same ID number. In general this problem will occur within all municipalities with more than one local CS office, which is not the case for Preza and Pogradec where there is only one local office.

Problems of the same category also occurred between a few tables internally in the system, creating linkage problems. Adjustments had to be done in some tables in the central database, but these changes do not affect the possibilities for data exchange between central and local databases.

The loading procedure revealed a number of duplicates. These duplicates were extracted to a separate CSV file, and handed over to the GDCS for correction.

The procedure for import and export – updating – of the central database will be simplified as a consequence of the new functionality for data exchange, see below.

Updating of information and data exchange

As mentioned above it was necessary to develop a functionality for exchanging updated information, after the initial loading had been done, which was done by Intech+ in January-February 2005.

In "Inhabreg" some transactions (births, deaths, marriages etc.) are updated directly in the main table while other transactions are partly updated in the main table and partly in separate tables. E.g. the act of birth is partly updated directly in the main table by adding a new record, and partly through the "Act of birth" table.

The "Act of marriage" and the "Act of divorce" are also partly updated directly in the main table by changing the codes for matrimonial status, family relation, family number etc. If there is any change of name or address, the changes are reflected in the relevant tables listed below.

The date of death is transferred from the "Act of death" table. This record is not deleted from the database.

For the regular updating extracts and transfer from only a few tables are necessary according to the system developer. (The name of the table appears in bold):

Place of birth for residents
The main table (both fields 18 and 19) is updated with the new place of birth. Details (date etc.) about the change as well as the old place of birth are kept in this table.

Resident's register
This is the change of book reference (candidate key) when a resident moves.

Nationality/citizenship
The main table is updated with the new values, while the history is kept in this table.

Name (first) of resident
The main table is updated with the new values, while the history is kept in this table.

Family name of resident
The main table is updated with the new values, while the history is kept in this table.

Date of birth
The value may be changed in case of correction. The main table is updated with the new values, while the history is kept in this table.

Resident's father's name
The main table is updated with the new values, while the history is kept in this table: Father's name before and after change, and date of change.

Resident's mother's name
The main table is updated with the new values, while the history is kept in this table: Mother's name before and after change, and date of change.

Resident's address
Change of residence is not reflected in the main table as there is no field for address information in this table, but the "Inhabreg" has functionality for registering change of residence with a separate table for address information and change of address. Address information is linked to the individuals through the PK.

A serious problem is that this functionality does not seem to be used. For the pilot offices the status is that only Tirana administrative unit number 10 has entered values in the address table, while the table is empty in the remaining pilot offices.

A main reason for not using this option may be the poor quality of the address system in Albania in general. Nevertheless it is very important that this table is updated even with insufficient information. One can not wait until the address system for the whole country is revised. The table is constructed to cover a variety of possible address concepts.

A detailed description of this table is found in Annex 5.

A candidate key

Since a unique personal identifier (an ID number as defined in the Law on Civil Status) is not yet generated for the population of Albania, different methods for finding duplicates must be applied. There is a set of fields defined as criteria for duplicate controls mentioned in the Bid Document for the tender. Here the following definition is outlined:

"For each record the following 6 fields:

- *Name*
- *Surname*
- *Father (i.e. first name)*
- *Mother (i.e. first name)*
- *Date of birth*
- *Place of birth*

These are the objects of the database on which the record comparison will be performed. If a minimum ***of 4 of these fields are the same****, then the record is considered a suspected record. (Possibly to be the same person). The ID number will only be assigned to the records which are not suspected."*

But these are variables which lack the exactness of an identifier, not even being numeric, but mainly character strings. As mentioned we propose to include "gender" among the criteria above.

However, the AP staff tried the usability of some of the opportunities that might exist within the "Inhabreg". In the main table we find for each residents an individual reference to the fundamental register:

- code for commune/municipality
- code for local CS office
- code for street for local CS office
- code for Fundamental Register book
- page number in book
- row number on page of book

These fields constitute the book reference – but can also be regarded as a compound key with the qualities of a candidate key. This might be a useful help for data cleaning purposes. Even if not all the fields are defined as numeric, the contents are mainly numeric as far as we have seen.

This (candidate key) is also mentioned in the Bid Documents for the tender as: *"IRK – Internal Reference Key. The IRK is the identifier in the old system and the reference for the archives".*

Sooner or later the manual routines/books will be replaced by a fully digitised system. But for a transition period, which might last for many years, the book reference is useful for control purposes, and besides it will always be the connection that shows the origin for the residents that initially were registered in the manual system. If errors or suspected duplicates are discovered, the book reference gives the local CS offices direct reference to the FR where the suspected errors are rooted.

In principle, each combination of the fields mentioned above – the candidate key – should only appear once, except for inaccuracies caused by character strings. Accordingly the fields can be used in automatic control procedures. A duplicate check (SAS duplicate check) on this candidate key showed the following results: Of the 228 491 persons in the main table, surprisingly enough, 6 371 individuals were found with the same book-reference, while the rest were unique.

There are two main reasons for this: either that the same individual is registered more than once in the same local database ("internal duplication" to be distinguished from "external" or "genuine" duplication, when the same person appears more than once, but in different CS offices), or that one of the digits in the candidate key is entered incorrectly from the data source (the fundamental register). A closer examination – comparing all the characteristic fields for the suspected internal duplicates – confirmed that in many cases the same person actually has been registered twice, within the same local database/local CS office. The difference seems to be that one instance of the same entity is entered in lower case and the other instance of the same entity in upper case. The rest of the suspected internal duplicates should be inspected for errors in the book reference itself. This is a kind of duplication which really should not occur and which should be easy to avoid through validation rules. The AP has separated these suspected cases of "internal duplication" by local CS office codes and transferred the data to the GDCS, which will take further action to clarify and clean these data.

Continuation of the AP

As mentioned, one of the main decisions at the "mid term meeting" with the MFA in May, was that the AP will continue for one more year from September 2005.

On 7 July 2005 Genc Radovicka, Director of National Register and the AP staff had a meeting where we focused on activities for the nearest future. The director proposed that the staff of the GDCS should start the cleaning process of the data with suspected duplicates or other errors. This implies errors

discovered by the AP and errors discovered by Intech+ during the loading of data into the central base, as discussed above.

As mentioned previously, no data entry has taken place since we made our data collection. Hence there is an increasing gap between the databases and the manual system. We agreed that it was very urgent to close this gap, if necessary by hiring operators for the pilot offices. But we also agreed that the daily updating is a responsibility for the staff at the local CS offices. The GDCS will give the necessary instructions and guidelines for this.

Annex 1. Protocol

PROTOCOL

between

THE MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND DECENTRALISATION, ALBANIA

and

STATISTICS NORWAY, NORWAY

Regarding

Assistance on the Modernisation of the Civil Registration System in Albania

The Ministry of Local Government and Decentralisation ("the Ministry") and Statistics Norway ("SN") have agreed as follows:

Article I

Scope and Objective

This Protocol sets forth the terms and procedures for the SN implementation of the technical and financial support to the Assistance on the Modernisation of the Civil Registration System in Albania ("the Assistance Project"), as hitherto granted by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

1. The Assistance Project is outlined in a revised Project Document with a budget originally dated May 2003, and revised June 2004.
2. This Protocol covers the period September 2004 – September 2005. In case of unforeseen circumstances this period can be extended.
3. The total amount for this part of the Assistance Project is 5.47 million Norwegian kroner (781,000 US dollars) as of August 2004.
4. The Objective of the Assistance Project is to give priority to the development and strengthening of the General Directory of Civil Status (GDCS), to give advice on the development of a modern system of civil registration, including methods for data cleaning, and to gain the necessary experience for creating a computerised central civil registration system. At the same time the Assistance Project will assist in the training of the personnel of the GDCS.

Article II

Co-operation – Representation – Administration

1. The Ministry and SN shall co-operate fully to ensure that the Objective of the Assistance Project is successfully accomplished. To that effect each Party shall furnish the other Party with all such information as may reasonably be required pertaining to the Assistance Project.

2. SN will provide technical consultants and backstopping regarding technical issues on long and short terms. SN will prepare technical specifications for hardware equipment for the GDCS if it is needed.
3. The costs connected with meetings of the reference group appointed by the Ministry shall be covered by SN.

Article III

Contributions of Statistics Norway

1. Any funds not fully utilised for one activity may upon written agreement between the Parties be utilised for the benefit of other activities within the Project.
2. SN will provide technical assistance to the General Directory of Civil Status, on issues such as definitions, standards, rules for civil registration (regulations and instructions), hardware, and training.
3. SN will procure hardware and software for the GDCS, as well as sufficient software for the period of Assistant Project, if required.

Article IV

Contributions and Obligations of the Ministry

The Ministry shall make all reasonable efforts to facilitate the successful implementation of the Assistance Project, and shall hereunder:

1. have the overall responsibility for the planning, administration and implementation;
2. provide sufficient qualified local personnel for the successful implementation of the project;
3. provide the long term consultant and other project personnel with access to such data and information, including visits to local sites, as may be reasonably requested to ensure the successful completion of the Assistance project;
4. ensure the personnel's security at local sites and during duty travels;
5. promptly inform SN of any condition which interferes or threatens to interfere with the successful implementation of the Assistance Project
6. assist representatives of SN to obtain permission to visit any part of the areas for purposes related to this Protocol and examine any relevant records, equipment and documents;
7. in the event of the arrest or detention, for any reason whatsoever, of any non-resident person made available under this Protocol, or of criminal proceedings, being instituted against them, notify the Norwegian Embassy in accordance with internationally established practice and, without delay, give the Norwegian Embassy the right to visit the arrested or detained person(s).

Article V

Procurement

1. SN undertakes to effect all procurements of goods and services for the Assistance Project as specified in the attached budget. All procurements shall be performed in accordance with generally accepted principles and good procurement practice. Procurement agreements shall include a clause stating that the agreement will be cancelled, in case any illegal or corrupt practices have been connected with the award of the execution of the agreement. No offer, gift, payments or benefits of any kind, which would or could be construed as an illegal or corrupt practice, shall be accepted, either directly or indirectly as an inducement or reward or execution of procurement agreements. Any such practice will be grounds for cancellation of this Protocol and/or the procurement agreement concerned.

Article VI

Reservations

1. The Parties agree to co-operate on preventing corruption within and through the Assistance Project. The Parties further undertake to take rapid legal measures in their respective countries to stop, investigate and prosecute in accordance with national law any person suspected of corruption or other international misuse of resources.

Article VII

Information – Evaluation – Reviews

1. Project reviews shall be carried out at the request of either Party.
2. SN shall have the right to carry out any technical or financial mission that it considers necessary to follow the execution of the assistance Project. To facilitate the work of the person or persons instructed to carry out such a monitoring mission, the Ministry shall provide all relevant assistance, information and documentation.

Article VIII

Disputes – Entry into Force – Termination

1. If any dispute arises relating to the implementation or interpretation of the present Protocol, there shall be consultations between the parties. In case of failure to reach an agreement the dispute shall be solved through diplomatic channels.
2. This Protocol shall enter into force on the date of its signature and shall remain in force until both Parties have fulfilled all obligations arising from it. Whether the obligations shall be regarded as fulfilled shall be determined in consultations between the Parties.
3. Notwithstanding the previous clause both Parties may terminate the present Protocol by giving one month's written notice to the other Party.

In witness whereof the undersigned, acting on behalf of their respective institutions, have signed this Protocol in two originals in the English language.

.....……	.....…
Place and date	Place and date
_____	_____
For the Ministry of the Interior	For Statistics Norway

Annex 2. File description of the main table of "Inhabreg"

Fields, or information, that occur in the Fundamental Register are typed in bold, while the other fields are specific for the computerised version.

Field #	Length	Contents	Type
1	15	Primary key (PK)	char(15)
2	4	Year for creation of fundamental register	number
3	4	Code for commune/municipality	char(4)
4	2	Code for local CS office	number
5	3	Code for street - local CS office	char(3)
6	8	**Code for book of fundamental register**	varchar2(8)
7	3	**Page number in book of fundamental register**	number
8	2	**Row number on book page**	number
9	15	**First name**	varchar2(15)
10	15	**Family name**	varchar2(15)
11	31	**Father's name**	varchar2(31)
12	31	**Mother's name**	varchar2(31)
|13	1	**Gender - code**	char(1)
14	2	**Family relation - code**	char(2)
15	15	Family number	char(15)
16	10	**Date of birth**	date
17	70	**Date of birth in spelling**	varchar2(70)
18	2	**Code for city of birth**	char(2)
19	7	**Code for district of birth**	char(7)
20	20	Name of place born abroad	varchar2(20)
21	10	**Citizenship**	varchar2(10)
22	1	**Code for matrimonial status**	char(1)
23	15	**Family name of spouse**	varchar2(15)
24	2	Code for religion	char(2)
25	10	Date of death	date
26	10	Passport number	varchar2(10)
27	150	Comments	varchar2(150)
28	10	Operator	varchar2(8)
29	24	Date and time of entry	Date long

Annex 3. Export procedure

This is the export procedure used to create the original dump files.

1) Export from command prompt:
`c:\exp user/password@orcl`

Then press enter to any question.
NOTE! The command `exp` only works for newer versions of Oracle. For version 8.0 the command is
`c:\exp80 user/password@orcl`

The following messages will appear in the DOS-window:

```
Export: Release 8.1.7.0.0 - Production on Mon Oct 4 17:31:26 2004
c) Copyright 2000 Oracle Corporation.  All rights reserved.

Connected to: Oracle8i Release 8.1.7.0.0 - Production JServer
Release
8.1.7.0.0 - Production Enter array fetch buffer size: 4096
Export file: EXPDAT.DMP  bathore_04.10.2004.dmp

(1)E(ntire database), (2)U(sers), or (3)T(ables): (2)U
Press enter (Always select User)
```

```
Export grants (yes/no):        yes  Press enter

Export table data (yes/no):    yes  Press enter

Compress extents (yes/no):     yes  Press enter

Export done in WE8ISO8859P1 character set and WE8ISO8859P1 NCHAR
character set

About to export specified users ...
User to be exported: (RETURN to quit) >     username
User to be exported: (RETURN to quit) >     enter
```

Annex 4. Staff of the General Directory of Civil Status as of 31 August 2005

Director General – vacant 1

A. Directory of Methodic and Control (5)
The Director – Enton Elezi 1

Sector of Methodic and Qualification
Specialists: 2
Vojsava Gjoliku, Jolanda Shehu

Sector of Control
Specialists: 2
Adriana Pataj, Rudina Brari

B. Directory of National Register (7)
The Director – Genc Radovicka 1

Sector of Information Technology (3)
Head of the sector - Dorian Xhixho
Specialists: 2
Engjell Zyferi, Krenar Fortuzi

Sector of System Utilisation (3)
Head of the sector - Sajmir Laçej
Specialists: 2
Sherif Koldashi, Majlinda Bejko

Annex 5. Address table of the "Inhabreg"

According to the "Law No 8950. On the Civil Status", 10.10.2002, article 8, "residence" is part of civil status. It is a responsibility for the GDCS to order every CS office to use this table.

Given the importance of this table, it is necessary to be specific about the structure and the contents of this table. The fields in the table are:

Field	Data type
Date of change	Date
Primary key	Char (15)
Code for street	Char (3)
Code for neighbourhood (lagje)	Char (2)
Code for centre (qendres)	Char (7)
Code for district	Char (2)
Building/house	Varchar2 (4)
Entrance	Varchar2 (2)
Apartment number	Varchar2 (2)
Comments	Varchar2 (80)
User/Operator	Varchar2 (8)
City block	Varchar2 (20)

The number and variety of fields is a recognition of the insufficient address system in Albania. It is likely that one or more of the address criteria may be missing and this solution opens for alternative registration. If the street number is missing, there might be a number of the neighbourhood to use in stead. The structure makes it possible to cover all address criteria that might exist. Some fields are redundant as part of a numeric address, but they can be useful additional information in a transition period while the address system is under improvement.

It is advisable that this design is kept and maintained. It is very important that the screen picture is used in each case of change of residence - no matter how incomplete the address is.

Annex 6. Documents

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[7] The donor letter from MFA.

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