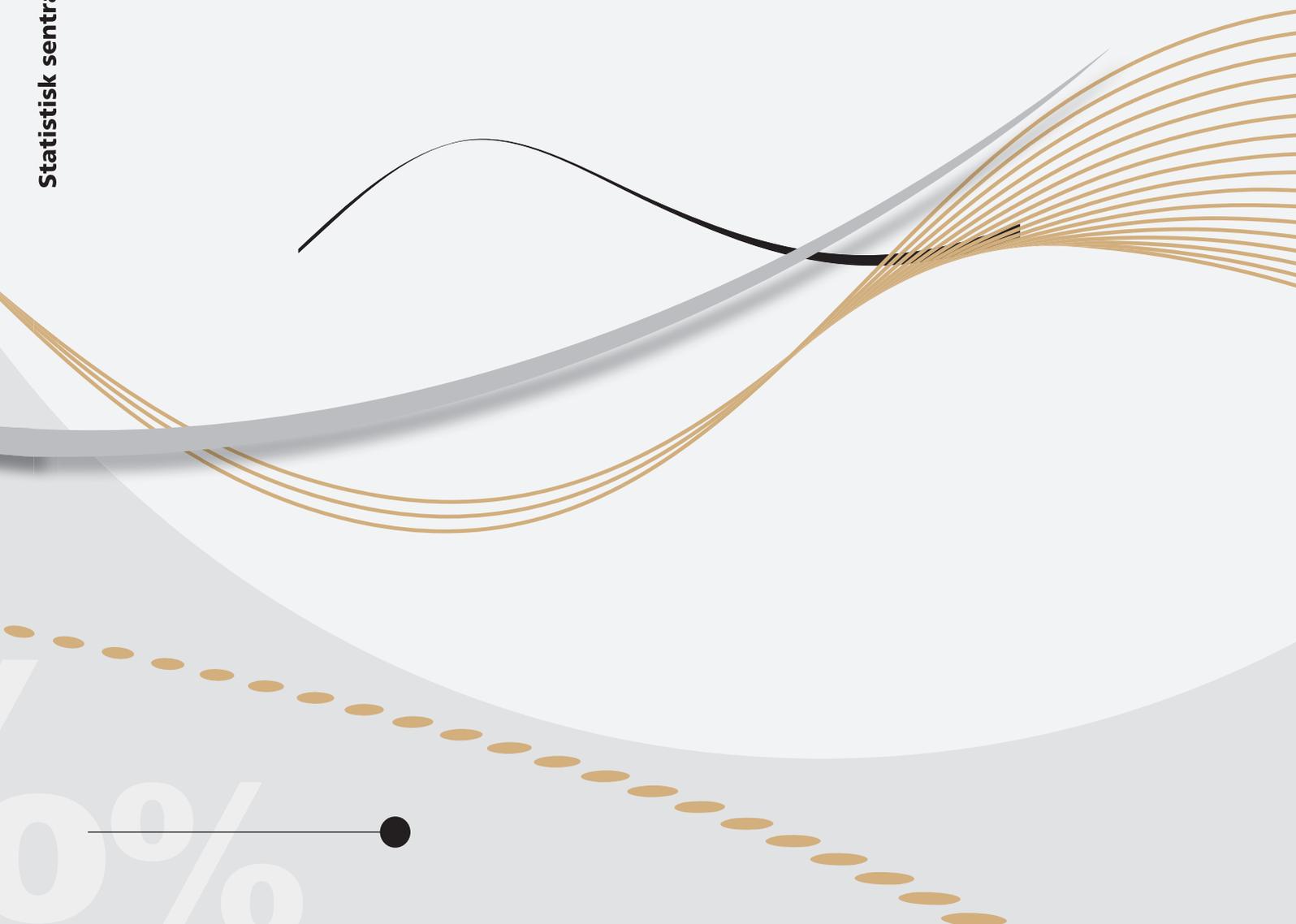


Institutional Development Cooperation in Statistics Norway

Statistics Norway



Statistisk sentralbyrå



Institutional Development Cooperation in Statistics Norway

Plans and Reports In this series, documents of an institutional nature and notes with a certain official character are published.

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Preface

Statistics Norway (SN) has been engaged in international development cooperation for more than 50 years. The last 20 years, this has been more formalised and is today organised through SN's Division for Development Cooperation. The goal is to contribute to the development of systems of statistics, analysis and policymaking in developing countries and countries in economic transition. Experience has taught us that institutional cooperation with a long time horizon is a suitable framework for developing sustainable statistical capacity in partner institutions.

Institutional cooperation can be done in various ways, and what works best will depend on various factors like the country in question, type of institution, competence and people involved. Further, it depends on the development stage that the institution is at when entering into a cooperation project, and the environment in which the institution must operate. SN has gained a great deal of experience related to institutional cooperation projects, and in this report we summarise how we work today based on our experiences gained over the years. We believe that many of our experiences and our way of organising institutional cooperation projects can be useful also for others that are involved in institutional cooperation projects with the objective of developing capacity in the different countries.

The main objectives of this report are to give the reader insight in what institutional cooperation is, why it can be a useful tool for development of sustainable capacity in a developing country and how SN organises its institutional cooperation projects today. Throughout the report we also describesome real life experiences from various cooperation projects in order to e.g.; explain why a cooperation tool is used or may be useful, exemplify potential risk factors, emphasise key elements for success.

Statistics Norway, 28 June 2013

Hans Henrik Scheel

Abstract

Statistics Norway (SN) has a long history of engaging in development cooperation. Over the last two decades, this cooperation has moved from individual ad hoc assignments to becoming an activity fully integrated in the institution. At the core of these activities today are institutional cooperation projects. This mode of providing statistical support to developing partners has developed from two parallel processes:

On the demand side, there has been an increased focus on the importance of statistics in the international development arena. International initiatives like the Millennium Development Goals, the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, and Busan Action Plan for Statistics have stressed the need for broader, better and more accessible statistics from developing countries. Governments and the international community are increasingly requesting statistics to monitor their policies. As a result we have seen increased donor investment in strengthening national statistical systems. On the supply side, Norad challenged Norwegian government institutions to engage in development cooperation in the early 1990's. SN responded positively by organizing such work in a designated Division for International Development Cooperation.

Official statistics should be produced by the National Statistical Office (NSO) and other official institutions that constitute the National Statistical System. Capacity for production and analysis of statistics is a necessary condition for good governance in a country. Building a national system of statistics and an NSO are however complex tasks that may take decades. An NSO struggling to develop its capacity requires a trustable partner that understands complex relations, and which has a sufficiently long term commitment to work through statistical production processes several times.

When cooperation moves from ad-hoc technical assistance into an institutional cooperation project, it must be properly anchored within both institutions. The initiation of development cooperation often comes from dedicated individuals with strong personal engagement and ability to implement and get results. Institutional cooperation, however, implies a move beyond dependence on such individuals: In order for the project to function independently of the presence of these dedicated individuals, it must be anchored at the very top level in the institution.

Successful design and implementation of cooperation projects rests on a good understanding of the processes around the cooperation. The broad social system, such as national laws, policies, user needs and power relations, defines one's action space. So do other domestic and international organizations. Statisticians working in SN are experts in statistical methodology, but do normally not have specific competence in developing cooperation. It is thus feasible that SN has a division with statistically knowledgeable staff who specializes in coordination of development projects such as application processes and reporting. This division then recruits the required subject matter experts from the regular SN production divisions.

The design and implementation of an institutional cooperation can be viewed from different angles. *Chronologically*, the typical stages are: Initiation, planning, implementation and phasing out. In *organizational* terms there are different stakeholders', whose roles and relationships in the cooperation need to be clarified. Finally, one must consider the choice of *cooperation modalities* for the support to yield the most efficient use of human and financial resources.

From practicing two decades of institutional cooperation our main lessons learned are as follows:

- *Thorough preparations are crucial.* Understanding both the partner's institution and the national system in which it operates is critical. Sub-projects must be based on the country's needs for statistics, other stakeholders' activities, and priorities in the NSDS. The choice of tools for cooperation and estimates for the time and human resources needed rests on knowing the institution's organization, level of development and capacity building needs. Scarce funding and an eagerness to show early results have often led to weak planning.
- *Good flow of information is at the core of success.* The importance of cultural awareness has been underestimated in several projects. Most of the practical problems projects face are due to lack of communication or misunderstandings. Long term advisers are crucial to manage information flows, knowing with whom and how to communicate. Through personal contacts, they can follow up after short term missions and translate the local culture of communication back to colleagues in SN.
- *Changing environments requires flexible projects.* The project set-up must allow for changes along the way. When circumstances change or unexpected problems arise, the strength of a project lies in how able we are to adapt. Keeping focus on *results*, and being open to adapting *activities* according to changes, allows for flexible project implementation. The main arena for evaluating progress and adjusting the plans are annual meetings. Norway has been a flexible donor, which has contributed to efficient activities and relevant results.
- *Repetition gives sustainable learning.* The main aim of our projects is sustainable capacity building. Full takeover by the partner NSO is easier when the production process is repeated, at least annually. Each individual learns better when tasks are repeated, and through frequent repetition, the organization will always host more than one competent individual. Acceptable quality in the production after a partner takeover, is the best criterion for a successful cooperation.
- *Users must be involved from the start.* Statistics is not an end goal; it is only relevant if it is used. Understanding and working with users of statistics is an indispensable condition to produce statistics that is valued and found relevant by users.
- *SN needs development experts organized in a separate unit.* Having statistical expertise is not sufficient to be able to coordinate a large statistical institutional cooperation project in complex surroundings, involving coordination with other relevant parties and participation in international forums. Organizing such development in a designated division assures continuity and institutional ownership to statistical capacity building projects.

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1. Abbreviations

| | |
|----------|---|
| AAA | Accra Agenda for Action |
| ADP | Accelerated Data Program |
| ASDI | African Statistical Development Index |
| BBSC | Bulletin Board on Statistical Capacity |
| DECDG | Development Data Group |
| DFID | Department for International Development |
| DG | Director General |
| EHS | Environment, Health and Safety |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organisation |
| GDDS | General Data Dissemination System |
| HRD | Human Resource Development |
| ICP | International Comparison Program |
| IDA | International Development Association |
| IHSN | Integrated Household Survey Network |
| ILO | International Labour Organisation |
| IMF | International Monetary Fund |
| IT | Information Technology |
| LFA | Logical Framework Approach |
| LTA | Long Term Adviser |
| LTM | Lon Term Mission |
| MAPS | Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics |
| MDG | Millennium Development Goal |
| MFA | Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
| MfDR | Managing for Development Results |
| NSDS | National Strategies for the Development of Statistics |
| NSO | National Statistical Office |
| NSS | National statistical system |
| OECD/DAC | Organisation for Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee |
| PARIS21 | PARTnership In Statistics in the 21 st century |
| PCBS | Palestine Central Bureau of Statistics |
| RBM | Result Based Management |
| SCB | Statistical Capacity Building |
| SCI | Statistical Capacity Indicator |
| SDDS | Special Data Dissemination Standard |
| SFR | Statistics for Results |
| SIDA | Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency |
| SN | Statistics Norway |
| SNA | System for National Accounts |
| SRF | Statistics for Result Facility |
| SSB | Statistisk Sentralbyrå (Statistics Norway's Norwegian name) |
| STA | Short Term Adviser |
| STM | Short Term Mission |
| SWAP | Sector Wide Approach |
| ToR | Terms of Reference |
| UboS | Uganda Bureau of Statistics |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNECE | United Nations Economic Commission for Europe |
| UNECA | United Nations Economic Commission for Africa |
| UNICEF | The United Nations Children's Fund |
| UNSC | United Nations Statistical Commission |
| UNSD | United Nation Statistics Division |
| WB | World Bank |

2. The structure of the report

It is our wish that this report may be a useful tool for others engaging in institutional cooperation, whether in statistics or other fields. The report gives an overview of how Statistics Norway got to where we are and how we have experienced institutional cooperation to function best. It is based upon experiences, though we have no example where all these elements have materialised at the same time. Our aim is however to achieve that.

This is our response to the request for us sharing experiences with others who engage in institutional cooperation, irrespective of what kind of institution it is. It is also a report aimed at those interested in the particulars of statistical institutional cooperation and details in how we organize it. Included are present and future partners in cooperation.

Because most chapters can be read independently from each other, we repeat some arguments several times.

In Chapter 3 we start with a brief overview of Statistics Norway's (SN's) initial engagement in development cooperation, and how it is a part of SN's general strategy.

In Chapter 4 we outline some of the history of development cooperation in SN, where institutional cooperation is our main approach.

Chapter 5 contains a summary of major international initiatives on monitoring development over the last 20 years. We describe how statistics plays a role in achieving the goals set for development of the world's poorest countries and how SN has participated and responded to this process.

In Chapter 6 we describe how SN defines institutional cooperation, the different levels of cooperation, the role of the broad social system in which the institution is set to operate and the tools for monitoring progress.

Chapter 7, 8 and 9 contain much of the same information, but written from different angles, depending on what the reader is looking for:

Chapter 7 describes the phases of cooperation: What is characteristic for each phase and what the outcomes should be. Chapter 8 focuses on the roles of the people involved and division of labour among these. Chapter 9 presents people and activities as a toolbox, from which one can pick the right tool for the right purpose.

At the end there are examples of organisation of a cooperation project and documentation. At the very end we give an overview of publications by the division of development cooperation in SN and a list of references for further reading.

3. Why Statistics Norway engages in development cooperation

Statistics Norway's (SN's) engagement in development cooperation relates to our strategy for statistics in our own country¹. Our strategy states:

“Statistics shall provide information on society as a whole and the various aspects of society; between groups, across areas, over time and across national borders. Statistics shall describe changes in the population, living conditions, the economy, the environment and the business community”.

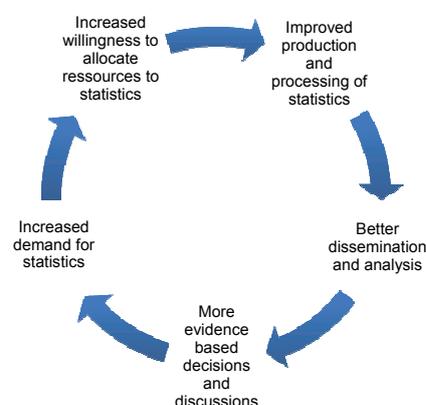
Statistics shall deliver the evidence base for knowledge of the social and economic situation in a country. By making statistics available to all, through analysis, research and modelling the statistical information will serve the planning administration, policy makers, businesses and public at large to take informed decisions and embark on evidence based discussions.

Developing countries and countries in transition have the same need for quality statistics as we have in Norway. Statistics describing the current situation, such as the share of the population below the national poverty line, the economic production and the children attending school are examples of key indicators that will contribute to providing a picture of the state of the country. Regular production of key indicators describing the development of the economy will provide the policy makers and the public at large an opportunity to follow the trends of development and react accordingly. The policy makers are given a better evidence base for designing appropriate policies and they can measure the impact of a specific policy change, for example whether agricultural production and marketing will increase if a government embarks upon a fertiliser subsidy scheme.

When statistics are used in making policy decisions, the statisticians will learn what statistical information is needed for the years to come. Close and constructive interaction between users and producers of statistics will improve the quality of future statistics. This is the positive circle of;

- improved production and processing of statistics
- better dissemination and analysis
- evidence based decisions and discussions
- increased demand for statistics
- increased willingness to allocate resources to statistics.

Figure 1: The positive circle of development of statistics



SN's strategy for development cooperation involves close and long term cooperation with sister organisations in need of developing their national statistical system. The motivation for SN to engage in development cooperation is to contribute to the Norwegian Government's effort to strengthen the basis for evidence based policy making and good governance in developing countries. In addition we have an obligation of contributing to ensuring comparable statistics between countries and to further development of global statistics.

SN may be one of the most centralised and research oriented national statistical offices (NSOs) in the world, and we believe that this gives us an advantage in promoting the idea of a "positive circle" for developing production and use of

¹ See http://www.ssb.no/english/about_ssb/strategy/strategy2007.pdf for more information

statistics in countries with less developed systems. Our institutional cooperation approach is based upon a solid base of experienced professional staff who has participated in the development of Norwegian statistics based upon global recommendations. They are used to train their own colleagues not only in technical matters, but also on how to design the statistical system in a manner which serves user needs. For many years there has been a well developed Nordic cooperation and European cooperation, hence most staff will know not only the Norwegian system, but also other national statistical systems (NSSs).

4. SN's road towards institutional development cooperation

Statistics Norway (SN) has a 50 year history of development cooperation. In the beginning it was usually spearheaded by top management. It was only in 1994 that development cooperation was institutionalised. At that time a specialised division for development cooperation was established. A combination of personal initiative and external demand made this possible:

- The head of statistical methods at the time, Ib Thomsen, had returned from two years working for UNICEF in Ethiopia and wanted other colleagues to participate in this rewarding type of work experience.
- The World Bank needed statistical advisors and Norwegian survey expert Bjørn Getz Wold, who was combined with working for the World Bank, teamed up with SN staff for household surveys. In SN, the head of social statistics, Gunvor Iversen Moyo, enabled this cooperation.
- In parallel, Norad challenged SN as one of several public institutions to embark upon development cooperation as an institution. Olav Ljones, the head of research on public economy, was asked by the Director General Svein Longva to organise a formal agreement allowing for this type of consultancy work.
- Since development cooperation was outside the mandate from the Ministry of Finance to SN, the work had to be organised on a cost recovery basis. However, Longva agreed to an initial investment to get the work started. Bjørn Wold was then hired to head this work. He continued as head of the division until 2013.

4.1. Early SN institutional cooperation projects

The strategy from the start was to establish institutional development cooperation for evidence based planning. We still had to prove ourselves and start with a more modest approach working on individual consultancies and programs such as the Priority Survey program with the Central Statistical Office in Zambia. This was a Poverty Survey and Analysis program in Zimbabwe and consultancy work for Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBoS) in the mid 1990s. Such work allowed individual staff members to build individual capacity and gain experience as well as SN to gain institutional experience and network. The consultancy work for the survey program in Zambia contributed to the World Bank program in Zambia and continued with individual consultants including from Statistics Norway. The Norwegian Embassy was prepared to provide support, but the Zambian Central Statistical Office preferred to ensure funding from the British DFID and the World Bank. The cooperation in Zimbabwe served as the basis for a poverty reduction program implemented by the World Bank. The consultancy work for UBoS was the start of a long period of on and off cooperation between UBoS and SN including agricultural statistics and the exchange of Fredskorps-candidates.

With no track record in institutional cooperation, SN had to ensure that both the donors and the partner country were satisfied with the cooperation. Since we had to prove ourselves within a short time horizon it was initially difficult to establish long term institutional cooperation programs including statistics, analysis and

planning. This guided the work towards technical tasks rather than special studies or ambitious planning as multilateral donors could do. The experience gained by individual staff members from both long term assignment and short term consultancy work for the World Bank was essential for being able to design proper activity plans and budgets. It also taught the management of the development cooperation in SN the need to ensure that the partner institution was made accountable from the start of the cooperation.

In the early 1990s there were no global agreements or recommendations for development cooperation in the field of statistics. Many donors came with their own surveys rather than accepting the work plans of the partner and high profile work which could yield nice publications was easily funded while the infrastructure was neglected.

Some of the large multilateral organisations were in the position to embark upon large programs such as the World Bank driven Social Dimension of Adjustment program which included technical assistance and financial support to three components, statistics, analysis, and policy decisions. This allowed for supporting a system for evidence based decisions. Staff from SN participated in some of this WB work such as in Uganda².

As a small and technical actor, the SN approach was to respond to expressed demands for technical cooperation and plan in an efficient manner such as using only 2-3 staff for 2 weeks to assess the situation and plan for a program of institutional technical cooperation, rather than a thorough assessment. The likely funds to come from Norad made it possible to negotiate with the partner institution for a technical program. Both partners were fully aware that this was also a proper way to learn about each other and build confidence and trust. Planning and management discussions would have to follow later.

In order to ensure predictability, the standard approach was to develop a program for 3 to 4 years with clear milestones for each year. The partner institution would report to the donor at an Annual Meeting, and present a work plan for the following year with revisions if need be. The first year SN would prepare a draft report based upon discussions with the partner, the next year this would be a joint exercise and in the following years, the partner institution would draft the report and work plan based upon discussions with SN. At that time the official policy by Norad following a recommendation from the Norwegian Statskonsult, was that Norway would make a contract with a partner country institution based upon a plan to hire a Norwegian institution. Hence SN was accountable towards the partner institution but not towards Norad nor the Norwegian Embassy. This was the official policy, but SN realized that we needed to build good cooperation with all stakeholders including both our sister-organization and the Norwegian Embassy.

As stated above, our strategy was to support a system of statistics, analysis, and policy making. At the same time we were dependent upon responding to needs expressed by our partners. And we learned already in our cooperation project with the Central Statistical Office in Zambia that few national statistical offices are in the position to launch such an extensive and coordinated approach involving analysis and planning in addition to statistics.

² Gulløy, Elisabeth and Bjørn K. Wold (eds.): Statistics for Development, Policy and Democracy. Documents 2004/4, 2004, Oslo: Statistics Norway

Palestine Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) – Top level commitment

A base for the Oslo-agreement aiming at a two-state solution in Israel/Palestine was a living condition survey following the Statistics Sweden – Statistics Norway – FAFO tradition which included building statistical survey capacity in what today is the Palestine Central Bureau of Statistics, PCBS. In the mid 90s, PCBS got German financial support to build capacity on a broader scale and hired various consultants including officers in national accounts and survey analysis from Statistics Norway. Hence the dynamic President of PCBS had learned about the technical capacity and to trust both FAFO and Statistics Norway. He approached the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, MFA, first for assistance from Statistics Norway to assist in developing a proposal for cooperation and then for funding.

The program of cooperation was again based upon the approach of PCBS being accountable to an annual meeting with either MFA or the Representative Office in Palestine, at least one long term adviser, study visits and short term missions. Statistics Norway worked as before along the same way as with new employees in Norway, demonstrate, assist and advise, do quality control both on technical issues and on management of the program itself.

PCBS succeeded in ensuring full commitment from the top management in Statistics Norway. This turned out to be extremely useful and we took the opportunity to have our Director General to give lessons to PCBS. Lessons at that level required follow up by the President of PCBS and it helped to improve the management style of PCBS. The Statistics Norway – PCBS cooperation was very useful and PCBS had grown to become a leading national statistical institution in the region and a number of the staff has qualified to join international statistical organizations.

Hence we worked with our international partners such as PARTnership In Statistics in the 21st century (PARIS21) to advocate for increased support to development of National Statistical Systems (NSS). When PARIS21 organised their first regional workshop in Lusaka, Zambia in 2000, SN participated and presented its approach and contributions. At that stage PARIS21 focused on the dual development of statistics and planning. This approach was already well developed for the economic sector with annual economic statistics and other basic statistics feeding into the system for national accounts which would again serve for macro economic modelling. But for social statistics there were hardly any systems for the joint development of evidence based planning. At the workshop SN addressed the need for coordinated development of statistics and planning. Through this the national statistical institutes learned about the information needs of the planners as well as what kinds of statistics, subject matter areas, frequency, details and timely delivery for a reasonable price were needed for the planning specialists and policy makers to utilise the statistical information. The planning authorities learned about available options; how national statistical offices could contribute with evidence based descriptions of the needs and actual situation in the social sectors and the socio-economic situation of the population.

SN focused on assisting the discussion among the representatives from a few countries such as Malawi, Mozambique, Uganda and Zambia. This allowed for the development of mutual knowledge and trust and hence served as the base for future institutional cooperation.

The very first project at institutional level was with the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics from 1997 to 2003. Since then, SN has been involved in long term institutional cooperation projects in many countries. These have often started by more limited cooperation such as working with funding from Germany in Palestine

or from the World Bank in Mozambique initially with our Swedish colleagues and then in the Scandinavian Scanstat team.

Our institutional cooperation projects have involved cooperation not only with sister organisations in developing countries, the national statistical offices, but also with other government institutions that are part of the National Statistical System. Our experience has been that this is a big advantage in order to assure ownership and accountability both in producing and using statistics. A strong user of statistics will be able to provide the producer with a clear picture of which statistics are essential to them, and take part in the planning of surveys to assure that the timing and methods used are fulfilling their needs as much as possible.

4.2. Learning from colleagues and partners

Statistics Norway learned the institutional cooperation approach with inputs from various colleagues and partners

Learning about the need for a comprehensive approach, statistics, analysis, policy from the Social Dimension of Adjustment program of the World Bank

The later head of development cooperation in Statistics Norway worked for several years in the Social Dimension of Adjustment program in the World Bank. This program aimed at building capacity for statistics, for policy analysis and for policy programming in partner countries in an integrated manner. At that time this was a new concept which turned out quite successful in some countries such as Uganda when the program ensured building capacity even for linking all three sub-programs by creating special units and program such as the Poverty Monitoring Unit in Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (Gulløy and Wold 2004: 33-41) .

Learning about the advantage of institutional cooperation from Statistics Sweden

When SN embarked upon development cooperation, Statistics Sweden had already been involved in such cooperation for some time. Statistics Sweden works upon request of the Swedish development agency Sida and was already in the forefront of institutional cooperation and the twinning approach, which is very much like our own institutional development cooperation. This type of cooperation is based upon a program with several modalities including an annual meeting at institutional level to agree upon an annual report and an annual plan, one or more long term resident advisors and a program of short term missions and study visits.

Learning about accountability from Norad.

Norad requested from the very start that the cooperation was based upon two agreements, one between the Embassy and the partner institution and one between the partner-institution and Statistics Norway. We found this a cumbersome arrangement. The partner-institution was supposed to be accountable and decide upon the program, but we had the expertise. In fact that was the rationale for the cooperation. We learned the advantage the hard way by testing the approach first in Palestine, then in other countries such as Malawi. The first year we listened to the needs and drafted the program and the annual report, but the next year we cooperated and the third year we only advised and ensured quality control. This way our partner-institution even learned to be accountable the Norwegian way.

Learning about accountability from our Palestinian colleagues

When we developed the cooperation with PCBS we told them that the official Norwegian directorate of consultancy work, Statskonsult, had written a report stressing that Norwegian institutions engaged in development cooperation were only supposed to talk to the partner-institutions. It was the latter institution which was accountable to the Norwegian Embassy. PCBS told us they were not that

easily fooled, they knew well that Statistics Norway was requested not only to inform the Embassy but to take command from them. And the local Embassy staff did agree with PCBS. Hence SN drafted the critical question for the Embassy to ask at the annual meeting, SN informed PCBS what the Embassy was likely to ask for and provided PCBS with a draft answer. This was not all a play, but a proper way to ensure quality and accountability and has turned out to be a useful approach in any country. Please also refer to the separate box on cooperation with PCBS.

Learning about management from Norad and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA)

International development has its own language and methods which is not part of the regular training for statisticians. Understanding this language is important to lessen the project management burden on our project partners and cooperate smoothly with other development partners. Donor funding comes with a framework of application styles and reporting demands that differ from the routines at SN. Official Norwegian aid has been using Logical Framework Approach and Results Based Management as basis for aid management. These concepts are frequently used among other donors and development partners too. SN staff has learned the methods through both cooperation with and courses provided by the MFA.

Figure 2: SN's Institutional Development Cooperation Programs and Projects

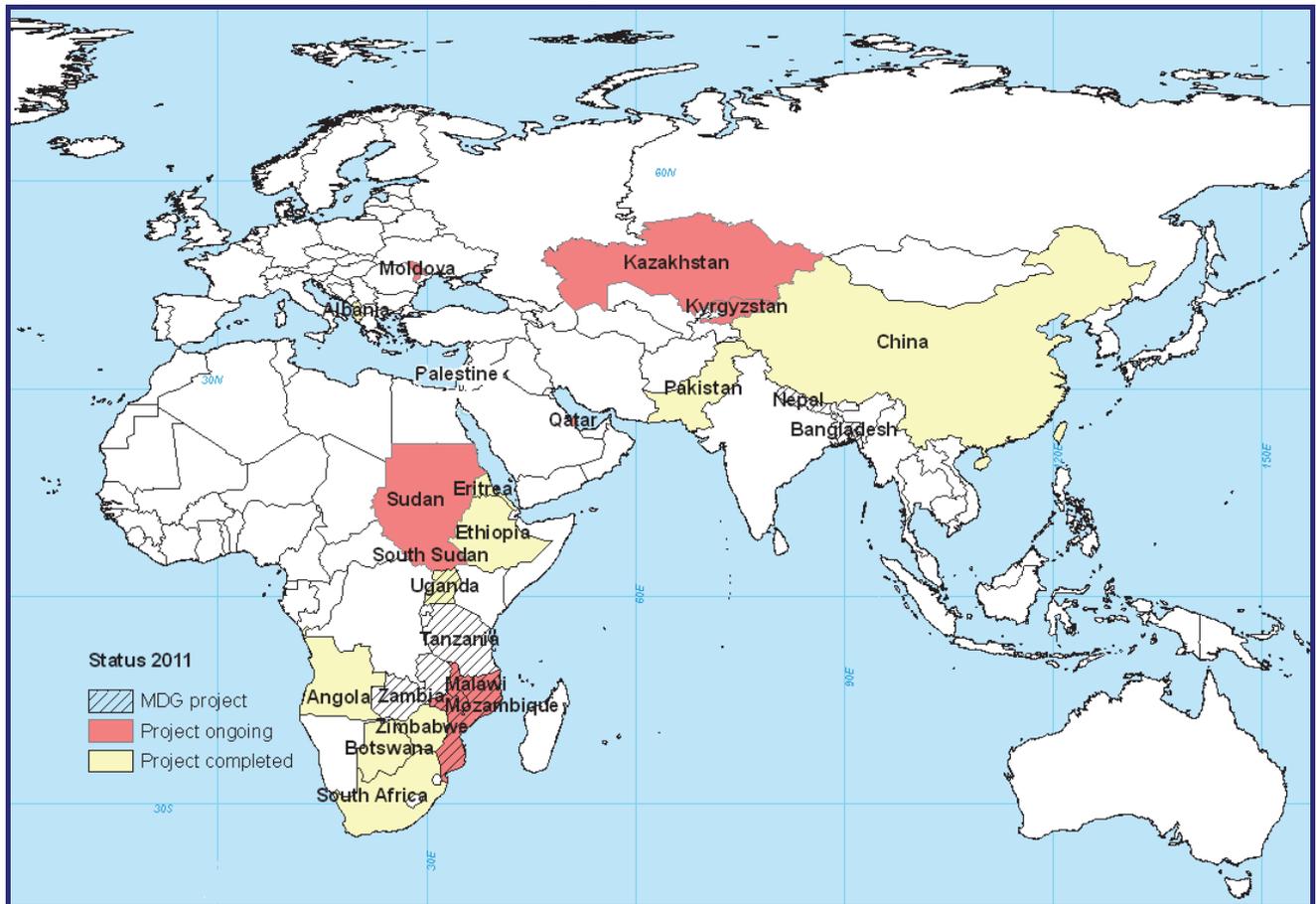


Figure 3. SN's Development Cooperation Programs and Projects

| Partner-country | Partner institution | Period | Focus | Funding source |
|-----------------|--|--------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| Zambia | Central Statistical Office | 1993-1996 | Survey on living conditions, poverty, consumption | World Bank |
| Zimbabwe | Ministry of Labour | 1993-1996 | Poverty Survey | Norad |
| Botswana | Health Statistics Unit Ministry of Health | 1996-2002 | Health Information System | Norad |
| Palestine | Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics | 1996-2001 | Population, Social and Area statistics Statistical methods and standards, Institutional cooperation, Management | Norad |
| China | National Bureau of Statistics | 1997-2001 | Energy statistics and air emissions inventories | World Bank |
| Mozambique | Instituto Nacional de Estatística – through a joint Scandinavian institutional support programme | 1998-present | National Statistical System | Norad, Danida, Sida, other donors |
| South Africa | Statistics South Africa | 1999-2001 | Time use, Gender analysis | Norad |
| Angola | Instituto Nacional de Estatística | 2000-2008 | Economic statistics, Social statistics, Statistical infrastructure | Norad |
| Albania | The Ministry of Local Government and Decentralisation | 2001-2011 | Civil Registration System | MFA |
| Uganda | Uganda Bureau of Statistics | 2002-2005 | Agriculture statistics | Norad |
| Malawi | National Statistical Office/Ministry of Economic Planning and Development/Ministry of Finance | 2003-present | Social statistics, Economic statistics, National Accounts and Macroeconomic modelling | MFA |
| Eritrea | National Statistical Office | 2004-2011 | Basic economic statistics, National accounts, IT infrastructure | Norad |
| Moldova | National Bureau of Statistics | 2004-present | Population statistics, Indices, Dissemination, IT, Statistical methods, National Accounts | MFA |
| Kazakhstan | Agency of Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan | 2006-present | Business register, National Accounts, Macroeconomic modelling, Total Quality Management | MFA |
| Kyrgyz Republic | National Statistical Committee | 2006-present | Social statistics, Statistical infrastructure, Administrative registers, Electronic reporting, CAPI | MFA |
| South Sudan | National Bureau of Statistics Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning | 2006 – present 2010 - present | CPI, Household Surveys, Business Survey, HRD Macroeconomic management | MFA |
| Sudan | Central Bureau of Statistics | 2009-present | Household survey | MFA |

5. Global initiatives for statistical development

5.1. The millennium development goals

When Statistics Norway (SN) established a unit for development cooperation in 1994, the global statistical community was quite fragmented. Then UN Statistical Commission (UNSC) agreed upon global statistical guidelines the same year stressing the need for independent national statistical matters. Their secretariat, the UN Statistical Division (UNSD) prepared and disseminated a series of technical recommendations on subject matter statistics. UN specialised agencies, funds and programmes such as FAO and UNICEF took a lead in the technical development of statistics within their sectors. As a response to several criticisms on the Washington Consensus³, the World Bank (WB) embarked upon statistical activities such as poverty measurement with their World Development Report on Poverty in 1990 and the Social Dimension of Adjustment program as a response to the Unicef report on Adjustment with Human Face. UNDP launched the Human Development Index and the Human Development Report. The focus on statistics was really coming to life. However, the various initiatives were typically competing rather than supplementing each other.

“We will partner to implement a global Action Plan to enhance capacity for statistics to monitor progress, evaluate impact, ensure sound, results-focused public sector management, and highlight strategic issues for policy decisions.”

Busan outcome document,
The Fourth High-Level
Forum on Aid Effectiveness,
2011

In 1999, the UN system and the WB backed OECD/DAC to promote a common set of cross cutting indicators. These were revised and presented as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with related targets and indicators at the inaugural meeting of PARIS21 in October 1999. The MDGs were approved by the UN General Assembly in 2000.

Initially the initiative was met in Norway and many other countries as just one of many statistical initiatives without any long term interest. A few years later, with promotion by the heavy actors of UN and the WB and spearheaded by OECD/DAC and PARIS21, the idea of measuring indicators at the global, regional and national level gained support. The MDGs established 8 goals and 15 targets and helped define specific indicators to measure progress towards these goals and targets. The global statistical community gave an active support to get the positive spiral going. A globally accepted set of indicators forced the various actors to cooperate on statistical system development. Over the years the sector organisations agreed upon who should be the caretaker of each of these indicators. When they were revised in 2008, even the ILO and FAO gave full support and provided valuable inputs to indicators in their own area while also supporting the overall MDG approach.

The UN system and the World Bank have, however, given main preference to report the MDGs as internationally comparable indicators by smoothing, adjusting, modelling and imputing the national data rather than using nationally produced data. PARIS21 has been the only international agency promoting country level development and ownership of statistics.

As one might have expected, the focus on social sector statistics has, to a certain degree, led to a lower interest in and support for economic statistics. The issue was raised in the 2008 revision of the MDGs, and led to some economic indicators

³ A set of economic practices and reforms deemed by international financial institutions (located in Washington, D.C.) to be helpful for financial stability and economic development; often imposed as conditions for economic assistance by these institutions. Phrase coined by John Williamson (1990).

being included among the MDG indicators. Today there is a growing acknowledgment of the need to develop and revise economic statistics and national accounts to provide a better information base for economic policy decisions.

5.2. Management for Development Results

During the first years of the century, the international process towards a global focus on statistics to follow the development across subject matter areas, regions and countries continued to climb at the international development arena. The International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey (2002) led to an agreement on the importance of increasing the effectiveness of aid and concrete actions in order to reach the MDGs by 2015. The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) endorsed the importance of ownership, harmonisation, alignment and management of aid programmes in order to achieve measurable results. The Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) adopted at the Third High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (2008) reiterated the international commitment to accelerate the effective use of development assistance. In 2011, the Fourth High-Level Forum in Busan built further on this through the Busan Action Plan for Statistics. Busan was the first time a statistical action plan received explicit endorsement globally at the highest political levels.⁴

Both the Paris Declaration and the AAA require much greater use of national statistics, and to follow up on this requirement the Second International Roundtable on Managing for Development Results (MfDR) set forth the Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics (MAPS). This plan identified 6 key actions to help developing countries develop and strengthen their national statistical systems, and a major focus was put on the need for developing countries to prepare and implement National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS). As a result of MAPS many countries have prepared NSDSs, and some have also implemented or started to implement the strategies. PARIS21 promotes the design, implementation and monitoring of the NSDSs, and by March 2013 approximately 79 percent of 118 International Development Association (IDA) and Lower Middle Income countries were either designing or implementing a NSDS⁵.

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness

The essence of the Paris Declaration lies in the five key principles agreed, from which most of the more detailed commitments were derived. These principles are:

Ownership: Developing countries set their own strategies for poverty reduction, improve their institutions and tackle corruption.

Alignment: Donor countries align behind these objectives and use local systems

Harmonisation: Donor countries coordinate, simplify procedures and share information to avoid duplication.

Managing for results: Developing countries and donors shift focus to development results and results get measured.

Mutual accountability: Donors and partners are accountable for development results

Quoted from OECD home page about The Paris declaration on Aid effectiveness.

<http://www.oecd.org/development/aideffectiveness/parisdeclarationandaccraagendaforaction.htm>

Lack of resources is a major bottleneck for many developing countries to be able to implement national statistical systems. The WB therefore initiated the

⁴ United Nations Economic and Social Council: Report of the World Bank on efforts in developing a plan of action on statistical development, <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/doc12/2012-16-BAP-E.pdf>

⁵ Reference to PARIS21 NSDS Summary table for IDA and lower middle income countries, March 2013

establishment of a Statistics for Results Facility (SRF) in 2009. This is a multi-donor initiative designed to increase the level of investment in national statistical systems (NSSs) in developing countries and to improve the effectiveness of both financial and technical assistance for building statistical capacity.

The Paris Declaration and the AAA commit donors to more systematic use of country systems, and to support countries in strengthening their systems. A country system for development of statistics would be the NSDS.

An NSDS provides a nationally agreed strategy for where the statistical system should be in 5-10 years, and any donor supported institutional cooperation project aiming at improving statistical capacity should be guided by the country's NSDS.

What makes a good NSDS?

While the form and content of an NSDS will depend critically on factors such as the administrative structure of government, the level of development and affordability, a strategy usually includes the following:

- The establishment of mechanisms for consultation with all the main stakeholders in a statistical system, including producers, users and providers of statistics;
- An assessment of the current status of the system, including from the user perspective, and taking account of existing improvement programmes;
- A vision, setting out an agreed statement of what governments and other stakeholders want from the statistical system at some point in the future. The vision provides a goal that everyone can agree on: a statement of where statistics should be;
- An identification of what strategic actions are required to overcome the constraints and achieve the vision, including prioritisation of actions;
- A detailed action plan with a timetable and a financing plan to put these strategic actions into effect in order to achieve the desired results;
- Identification of mechanisms to monitor progress, including indicators and reporting to inform the updating and adaptation of the strategy.

Quoted from the PARIS21 Guide to designing a NSDS (2004)

Other international statistical programmes that play a role in the pursuit of developing statistical capacity in developing countries through promoting common standards and frameworks for statistics are; 2010 population programme (UNSD), the 2010 round of Agriculture censuses (FAO), the 2011 ICP-round (WB), the implementation of SNA2008 (UNSD), environmental statistics and climate change (UNSD), the Integrated Household Survey Network (IHSN) and ADP programs (WB and PARIS21) and data standards; GDDS and SDDS (IMF).

5.3. How Statistics Norway has participated and responded to these initiatives

SN has followed this global development along four lines:

1. An active participation in the global discussion
2. A special focus on PARIS21
3. A special focus on capacity building in our institutional development cooperation
4. Participation in international professional development with focus on dissemination, poverty-measurement and analysis, registers, national accounts, macro economic planning and national measurement of the MDGs

An active participation in the global discussion

While the global statistical community over the last two decades has acknowledged the need to build national capacity and national ownership to ensure sustainable development, it has taken time to accept that this takes a long time, and that implementation of activities must be adapted to capacity constraints related to human and institutional capacity in the developing countries. In SN's opinion, the international and large bilateral institutions have focused too much on their own special exercises such as the Integrated Household Survey from the WB, the Multiple Indicator Survey from UNICEF, the Demographic and Health Survey from USAID, the heavy system of Agricultural Census and Crop Forecast surveys from FAO, using their own software packages for statistical analysis. In SN's view the one-sided prioritising of getting the international data ready may have hampered development of national statistical capacity in developing countries since these large sector specific one-time (or at best periodic) studies do not promote long term national capacity building.

In the global discussion on development of statistical capacity SN has advocated for the need to build national capacity even if this in the short run may result in delayed international data.

A special focus on PARIS21

SN has been an active participant in PARIS21 since the inaugural meeting in Paris in October 1999. PARIS21 has been in the international forefront in the two main issues SN has promoted for its own engagement in institutional development cooperation projects;

- building national competence rather than focusing on internationally published statistics and
- building the link from production and processing of statistics through analysis and dissemination to policy decisions and discussion.

We joined the work of PARIS21 at the first regional planning workshop in Lusaka in 2000 assisting in linking statistics and planning at the national level. This led to an institutional cooperation project with the national statistical office and planning authorities in Malawi (2004) which is still ongoing. We have also assisted a number of countries in their effort to develop a NSDS in promoting the PARIS21 guide for designing NSDSs.

A special focus on capacity building in our institutional development cooperation

The SN approach has been to build national statistical capacity at individual, institutional, and national level by a stepwise cooperation. Stepwise in the sense that we start with demonstrating a production process, work closely together with our partner repeating the production process and over time gradually reduce the technical assistance until the process is fully owned by the local partner.

Participation in international professional development with focus on dissemination, poverty-measurement and analysis, registers, national accounts, macroeconomic planning and national measurement of the MDGs

SN has developed special competence in certain subject matter areas we believe can contribute to further improvements of statistical production systems in developing countries. We have developed methods for annual poverty modelling, a household survey system with an annual core survey, area measurement using GPS and a system for dissemination of national MDGs.

We acknowledge the obligation to develop and document our expertise in these areas, and we try to develop a partnership with other institutions when possible, such as follows:

- Poverty modelling – cooperation with independent researchers and World Bank staff

- A Household Survey System with a Core Survey – cooperation with World Bank staff
- Area measurement using GPS– cooperation with FAO staff
- MDG dissemination – cooperation with UN Statistical Division

The international focus on the MDGs has given a boost both to the acknowledgement of the importance of statistics in the fight against poverty and to the dissemination of statistical information to verify progress made in reaching the MDGs. However, the statistics to measure progress on the MDGs have been disputed as data from different sources tell different stories for the same phenomenon. Initially, it was planned that statistics collected and processed by the NSOs, e.g. official statistics, were to be used to measure progress on the MDGs. However, for a number of reasons this is often not the case. National statistical data are based on surveys, decennial censuses and administrative sources. Many countries cannot afford to have annual surveys, hence the information is not available for all years, and furthermore the methods and concepts in survey taking differ from country to country. From an international perspective this can affect the quality and the overall usability of the collected data. Data may also be missing for some years. In these cases the UN makes their own estimates, often based on national figures, but also only with the use of statistical models, previous published figures or figures from other countries in the region. This is often done without cooperating with the NSO.

The consequence of this practise is that there are differences between the national and international figures and the NSOs report that this creates uncertainty about their official statistics. This uncertainty is exacerbated since the UN does not always document why specific figures are not used nor how they derive the international figures. The UN is concerned about these differences and tries to mitigate them. In the last UN recommendations the use and documentation of national figures was emphasised. The UN Statistical Division (UNSD) has also developed databases to show the differences between national and international figures for some countries. But there is still work to be done. At a global level, the majority of the data are derived from the NSOs, whereas for Africa and Asia this share is lower, often because the figures are not available.

The response to this is to increase national ownership of and dissemination of MDG statistics by development countries. As a practical initiative, SN has established a project aiming at developing a system for storage, documentation and dissemination of already collected MDG statistics at the national level. The partners are NSOs in traditional development partner countries of Norway; Bangladesh, Malawi, Mozambique, Nepal, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. The project was initiated in 2009 and includes establishing a statistical databank following the Nordic approach (also used by FAO), and annual 4 page factsheets for each country presenting the highlights of the MDG indicators from 1990 and up to today. In countries where SN also has ongoing institutional development cooperation, the MDG project is an integrated part in developing capacity for dissemination and use of statistics for policy decisions.

Institutional Cooperation with key users of statistics – developing capacity for analysis

In addition to produce nearly all official statistics in Norway, SN has a strong research department focusing on research, policy analysis and methodologies for undertaking economic analysis. It has a long tradition of building and using frameworks for analysing macroeconomic as well as microeconomic issues. This makes it possible for SN to provide support to partner countries in developing capacity not only on statistics but also on use of statistics for macro- and microeconomic analysis.

In Malawi two institutions, the National Statistical Office and the then National Economic Commission which is today a part of the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, jointly approached the Norwegian Embassy and asked for support from Statistics Norway in 2000, first to plan for institutional development cooperation and then for implementation of the plan. This was the start of an integrated institutional development cooperation which today has moved into development cooperation for a national statistical system and economic planning working with the National Statistical Office, the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, and the Ministry of Finance. This cooperation started out in 2004, and focus has been on improving basic economic statistics necessary for the National Accounts. The system for National Accounts has been developed through the project, and is now used by the policy makers in the government. A macroeconomic model has been developed within the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, and a unit is being trained to maintain, develop further and use this model in policy making.

In South Sudan Statistics Norway has established institutional cooperation projects both with the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MoFEP). In NBS we have had a broad cooperation project going on since 2006 with the objective of developing systems for regular production of statistics that are vital for policy makers in their effort of building a new nation. The cooperation project with MoFEP has as its main objective to develop capacity in the ministry for macroeconomic analysis and planning.

We believe that the institutions involved in both these cooperation projects benefits from each other in that it facilitates cooperation and transfer of knowledge and needs between producer and user of statistics; i.e. about ongoing activities, plans for statistical production and the need for statistics for analysis and policy making in the ministries. A strong user of statistics will be able to provide the producer with a clearer picture of what statistics are essential to the user. Good cooperation between producer and user can contribute to improved planning of surveys to ensure that the content, methods and timing are fulfilling the needs of the user.

5.4. European Union initiatives

Eurostat has for a long time had development programs with developing countries including both country level work and development of special approaches such as Eurotrace for foreign trade statistics.

When the Central European countries applied for membership in the EU a new era started with a large and comprehensive program for candidate countries. SN participated in this program with a special focus on the Baltic states, partly directly through Eurostat and partly through EFTA's Statistical Office in Luxembourg.

When the candidate countries were included in the EU as full members, a new phase of cooperation with neighbouring countries was launched. In parallel, the UN Economic Commission of Europe (UNECE) rolled out a program of cooperation with countries in the regions covering the Balkans, South Caucasus and Central Asia. Both UNECE and Eurostat have developed important tools for assessment and planning i.e. their Peer Review approach and their Global Assessment. Again SN has taken an active part in this work.

5.5. Nordic development

When SN embarked upon development cooperation, Statistics Sweden had already been involved in such cooperation for some time. Statistics Sweden works upon request of the Swedish development agency SIDA hence from the very beginning they were in a position to design comprehensive program of institutional cooperation based upon a twinning approach, which is very much like our own institutional development cooperation, but with even larger emphasis given to long term resident advisors.

The cooperation approach by Statistics Denmark developed in parallel with ours and has a number of common elements. However the approach of the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs is different from that of Norad and the Embassies. Rather than making the partner-institution accountable at an annual meeting, the Danish Ministry/Embassy staff are actively engaged in both technical and financial sides of the cooperation. That has yielded an active involvement by the Embassy, but not the same accountability at an annual meeting by the national statistical office.

Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and Norway have learned from each other and even implement joint projects through direct contracts and joint bidding.

Statistics Norway is one of very few national statistical offices with a national accounts department and with a large mainly economic research department responsible for large scale macro- economic models. In fact we have taken this one step further when our Ministry of Finance use the Statistics Norway macro-economic models for their economic forecasts guiding budget policy and other economic policy by the government. The Ministry of Finance may use their own assumptions, but the model comes from Statistics Norway and whenever we update the model, which we do on a regular basis, the Ministry of Finance get a copy and full information. This allows for a unique chain from basic economic statistics to national accounts to macro- economic models and national economic policy. This chain is an ideal situation that ensures the quality of statistics. Further it promotes cooperation at the national level from statistics to planning and evidence based policy decisions. Where applicable, SN has supported projects with similar aims in cooperation countries.

Malawi – Tripartite cooperation

In 2000 PARIS21 arranged its first regional workshops, including one in Lusaka, Zambia for the Southern and Eastern Africa in order to promote the combined development at country level of statistics and planning for evidence based policy. Statistics Norway participated and contributed to the country level planning for statistics and social and economic planning. The two officers from Malawi followed and ensured support from the Norwegian Embassy to get assistance from Statistics Norway to develop a plan for a tripartite cooperation between the National Statistical Office (NSO) and the National Economic Council (NEC) in Malawi and Statistics Norway to build national capacity over a period estimated to 12 years. The program of cooperation with Statistics Norway is based upon NSO and NEC being accountable to the Norwegian Embassy for annual meetings with annual reports and updated plans. It has over all these years comprised a mixture of long term advisers resident in Zomba or Lilongwe, short term advisers, study trips etc, but first and foremost a long term commitment from all institutions and a dedicated follow up from the Norwegian Embassy.

The program of cooperation has succeeded along a number of dimensions, building the NSO capacity for social sector surveys which fed into the planning of NEC which today is the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development (MEPD). Capacity was also built for improved annual economic statistics, national accounts, and macroeconomic planning. These components got special support from the Minister of Finance and the system is now the base for the economic forecasts for the government budget and the regular negotiations with IMF. Despite some effort, the program never managed to ensure a close link to the academic institutions, but has now managed to establish a close link through assistance from the Germans.

There are still challenges, mainly jointly to ensure a proper national strategy of statistics linking closely up to the policy planning in the ministries, and to establish a system for regular but less frequent updates of the statistical sub-systems, but also some further development such as to establish a nationally coordinated system of statistical dissemination of data and metadata with quality-control and improve the national capacity for policy analysis.

6. SN's current approach to international development cooperation

Institutional development cooperation has a much broader scope than traditional technical support. Technical support comprises providing experts to assist on specific subjects or areas. The timeframe for support can be short or long, and does not necessarily have an explicit goal of achieving long lasting capacity development in the institution where support is given. Institutional development cooperation has an overall goal of developing the institution to be more effective and more able to fulfil the goals set for developing the National Statistical System (NSS). For SN to view a cooperation as an institutional development cooperation there needs to be a binding agreement in place between SN and one or several institutions in the cooperating country. The agreement should have a relatively long time-frame, and have a goal of developing the NSS. In the agreement, SN and the partner institution(s) outline the areas of cooperation, the goals set, organisation of the work and the areas of responsibility for the involved institutions. A condition for it to be an agreement for institutional cooperation is that it is signed at the top managerial levels in all organisations. We think this is a key element to help ensure ownership and commitment of the arrangement to fulfil the goals set by all sides.

“Training must do two things:

First, it must move your attitude.

Second, the skills you gain can only be seen in your work. If work has not changed, then training has done nothing.

And remember, the knowledge you gain is not yours. You have to pass it on to others.”

H.E. Isaiah Chol Aruai, Chairperson of NBS, South Sudan.

6.1. Three levels of Institutional development

Institutional development can cover three levels:

- the institution's structure and organisation;
- the institution's human resources; and
- the hardware resources⁶.

SN's institutional development cooperation projects have human resource development as a key element, but in addition we always take into account and evaluate the need for supporting elements that can contribute to development of the institution's structure and organisation.

All three levels of institutional development are influenced and dependent on each other in order to develop further. Even if the people that work in the institution are the key for development, they can not develop without the proper framework for executing their skills and sharing it with others. E.g. it does not help if you have one person who knows the proper production routines for a survey if there are no routines in place for documentation, or if the organisation of the unit responsible for the survey does not function, or if the IT-tools are lacking, etc. In general we can say that a well organised institution gives a better growing field for human resource development.

Within all levels of institutional cooperation SN emphasises the need of producing visible results, such as documentation reports, statistical reports, electronic dissemination and statistical figures for planning and discussions. On-the-job learning is a key tool, and developing capacity through on-the-job training makes it possible to produce visible results, hand-in-hand with developing capacity.

⁶ Reference to a review and Synthesis of lessons Learned from Inst. Coop & Cap. Build. 2008 by Nordic Consulting Group

6.2. Development of the institution's structure and organisation

The cooperating institutions often lack the experience, have few resources and have a shortage of skilled personnel relative to the task the institution is set to do. The management philosophy and organisation is often very different from ours and the pay system may be very different from what we are accustomed to.

In order to be able to develop a fruitful cooperation and achieve the goal of institutional development it is important for SN to know and understand the structures in force in the organisation that we are cooperating with; Who has decision making powers, who can establish projects and sign contracts, who manages and controls the human resources within the organisation, etc. It is crucial to identify decision makers at a very high level and ensure support for the project from the leadership. It is also important to know how the organisation operates in solving different tasks, and even more important why its done this way. We have many times found that what seems to be an ineffective way of doing things at the first glance, in fact have a rational explanation when we look closer and may need other actions than first anticipated in order to become more effective .

It is important to know about and strive to understand the partner institution's structure and organisation when planning and implementing a cooperation project. By underestimating the importance of this dimension, there is a great risk that we will fail in reaching the goals set. It is our experience that it does not help to develop more effective methods or routines, or more competent staff if this is done at the wrong place, time or level in the organisation and if the management is not involved in the correct way according to how this should be done in the specific country and partner institution.

One very important project tool in order to succeed in this area is to have a *long term adviser* from SN working in the partner organisation, who can understand the constraints and needs of that specific institution, and contribute in the process of establishing a solid basis for cooperation.

Study visits to Norway give the visiting institution a possibility to see other ways of organising work that may give ideas for changes in the home organisation.

Areas aiming at developing the institution's structure and organisation are;

- Management systems
- Budgeting and accounting procedures
- Statistical- and IT-infrastructure
- Dissemination strategies
- Routines and systems for documentation of the institute's work and archiving of data
- Development of adequate training schemes for staff

6.3. Development of the institution's human resources

Our main tool for human resource development is on-the-job learning,

- Through the Long Term Adviser (LTA) working closely together with the local staff on a daily basis, and by organising and conducting timely short term practical courses.
- Through study visits to Norway observing and learning about i.e. methods, production systems or organisational issues that are relevant for the partner institution
- Through Short Term Missions (STM) conducted by subject matter specialists from SN. These missions normally have a timeframe of 2 weeks and the short

term experts will always have a counterpart in the cooperating institution to assure transfer of knowledge.

While on-the-job training is our main approach for human resource development, our cooperation projects also include short term training courses in statistics, methodology and other subjects.

Establishing a Resource Centre and in-house Statistical School in Malawi

To facilitate short term training of staff and other Human Resource Development (HRD) activities at the National Statistical Office in Malawi (NSO) a Resource Centre was established. The Centre is a room located in NSO-Zomba with a capacity of 20 people, and is used to support a number of priority areas mentioned in the *HRD Action Plan 2009-2014*. In addition to being a location for courses, the Resource Centre can be used for all other activities that in some way contribute to HRD for NSO- and NSS staff; presentations, discussions, workshops, seminars, subject matter meetings, study groups, self studies, etc. Materials in all areas of official statistics, literature on statistics and related areas, documents from subject matter workshops, seminars and conferences are made available in the centre.

To help organise all the different activities, a HRD-secretariat was established. The secretariat has the responsibility to make sure that the centre is available, has books and training material available and keeps and updates the booking calendar for the various organised activities in the centre. The secretariat is in charge of organising courses through the Statistical School. The modalities for a statistical school following the form of SN's statistical school have been developed in NSO. A course catalogue is available, and some of the courses have been conducted in the Resource Centre.

The Resource Centre and the Statistical School have made it possible for NSO staff to train themselves in an organized way. It is our understanding that the subject matter staff in NSO is very positive to having this centre and sees the usefulness of the Centre and the School. In spite of this it has proven difficult to keep up the use of the centre. The reasons for this can be many. It may be that the ownership and commitment to this is not good enough at the top managerial level in the partner institution, or that it is difficult to prioritise this activity above other tasks and commitments,

A general lesson learnt from this is that even if a new system is developed and agreed upon by all parties, it does not necessarily mean that the system will run without any more assistance from outside. It is necessary to follow up with resources and advice also after implementation of a system to help consolidate the system and the new routines. Having a long term institutional cooperation project ongoing gives the possibility to follow up on new routines developed also after implementation.

6.4. Development of infrastructure

The infrastructure in the institution must always be taken into account when planning a cooperation project. Infrastructure includes computers, software, offices/buildings, furniture, equipment for fieldwork, cars, etc. Even if SN's institutional cooperation projects most often have technical support and training of individuals as its core activities, it may sometimes be beneficial for the end goal of developing human capacity, to support some hardware and software investment.

Investment in IT-system necessary for development of statistical capacity in Malawi

SN has cooperated with NSO in Malawi since 2004. From the beginning, the cooperation has been broad based, focusing on building sustainable national capacity for production of both social and economic statistics. When planning the project one of the presumptions was that investments in IT-infrastructure to support statistical production should be left for other cooperation partners of the NSO. When this support never materialised it started to affect the possibility of developing statistical capacity, and dissemination of statistics was hampered in many ways. These problems included:

- Stand alone PCs and open internet access led to serious virus problems, security problems, loss and misuse of data and documentation
- Institutional memory was limited or not accessible because it was stored on stand alone PCs or lost due to virus problems
- Productivity was hampered because it was difficult to find and make use of material already developed
- Historical data were few or difficult to access/find
- Metadata were few or difficult to access/find
- Communication and flow of information internally in NSO was hampered
- Providers and users of data lacked confidence in NSOs ability to secure sensitive data and were therefore reluctant to give this type of information

The lack of a comprehensive IT-system was becoming a major bottleneck for progress, and in order to improve the possibility for capacity development it was decided that it was necessary to support investments in the IT-structure of NSO. A centralised IT-system was installed in 2009/10 as part of the SN program.

6.5. The institution as a partner

There are strong advantages in being an NSO cooperating with other NSOs. Even if the development stage of the institutions may be very different, the key statistical products of an NSO are similar all over the world and have a common Code of Practice⁷. All NSOs are obliged to use the international standards developed, and the production processes and dissemination methods of the various statistical products have large similarities independent of the development stage. The statistical language is universal. We think that this is a strong argument that supports institutional cooperation between NSOs.

SN believes that accountability, continuity, ownership and commitment of the project are strengthened when the institutions themselves are responsible for reaching the set goals, and not an individual consultant on a short term assignment.

The institutional setting makes it possible to draw on a broad knowledge base making it easier to find the best possible experts for the various specialised subject matter areas as the development progresses.

⁷ UNs Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics

For SN, development cooperation is not a main activity, and the short term experts that contribute in developing cooperation projects normally do not have much experience in working with developing countries. Isolated this could imply a risk since the expert is not being able to fully understand the cultural setting and different framework when providing assistance to the partner organisation. This element of risk is one important reason for why SN has built up a formal unit with special knowledge in the area of development cooperation. This division is responsible for planning and coordinating activities and can help guide the short term advisers when necessary. The system of having long term advisers to help plan, implement and follow up on short term missions is another important tool that makes it possible to have very successful short term missions with advisers lacking experience from working in developing countries but have expertise in statistical areas where they normally work.

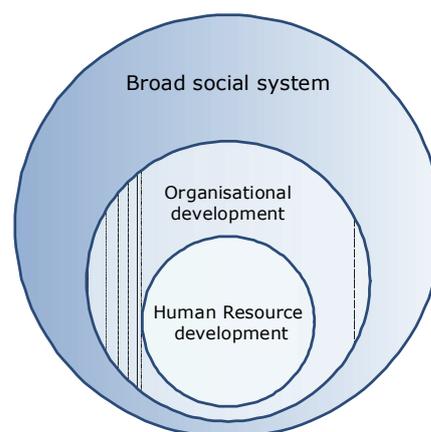
6.6. The broad social system

There are factors outside the institution that also affects the institutions possibilities for change and development. In order to operate, the institution must follow the rules and regulations, laws, policies, power relations and social norms that govern civic engagement⁸. Regulations for recruitment, promotion and remuneration of public employees are elements in the surrounding social system that can have a large effect on the possibilities for developing sustainable human capacity development.

The NSO needs to interact and cooperate with other institutions, and development in one place often requires the development of other institutions upon which you are dependent. The level of independence of the NSO as well as its rights to collect and publish data from the population, businesses and other organisations may be very different from what we are accustomed to in Norway. A central issue in a statistical system is the legal framework of the Statistics Act. In Norway SN has a high degree of independence and good legal support which allows us to be able to demand information from organisations and administrative registers. We also enjoy a high level of trust in the Norwegian public. This means people are seldom afraid to provide sensitive information in surveys because they know they will stay anonymous. In many partner countries, these legal and trust issues are more difficult. The legal framework may be weak or not well implemented and this may hamper the NSO's possibilities of utilising administrative registers or collect sensitive data for statistical purposes. The public or enterprises may not recognise the value of statistics and hence be sceptical towards giving out information.

Even if it is difficult and time consuming to influence and/or change the framework in which the institution operates, it does not mean we can disregard it. When entering into capacity development programs, it is crucial to have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the broad social system where you are operating in order to plan and organise the support as efficiently as possible given the framework, but also in order to see if it is possible to influence factors directly or indirectly so that it gives more room for capacity development in the institution.

Figure 4: The broad social system for capacity development



⁸ Reference to Capacity Development. A UNDP Primer, 2009

When fertile seeds fall on stone

In August 2004 Statistics Norway started a project with the National Statistics Office (NSO) of Eritrea. Through two long-term resident advisors the project was to assist developing the NSO to be a modern producer of Official Statistics. NORAD and the Norwegian Embassy in Asmara financed the project while the technical work was executed by SN.

The NSO had a competent staff and clever management. As a first step, a complete and well-functioning IT server system was installed. This central information technology system was serving all staff and all kinds of IT related work. It was designed to efficiently harmonise all types of future production and statistics. The security of data and users were proven to function very well. From 2004 to 2009 it functioned excellently.

This system allowed the NSO to receive individual data for companies & persons for the whole country and to store and process the data in a transparent and safe way. Complete routines were finished for the Consumer Price Index, Foreign Trade Statistics and the Supply- and Use Table system.

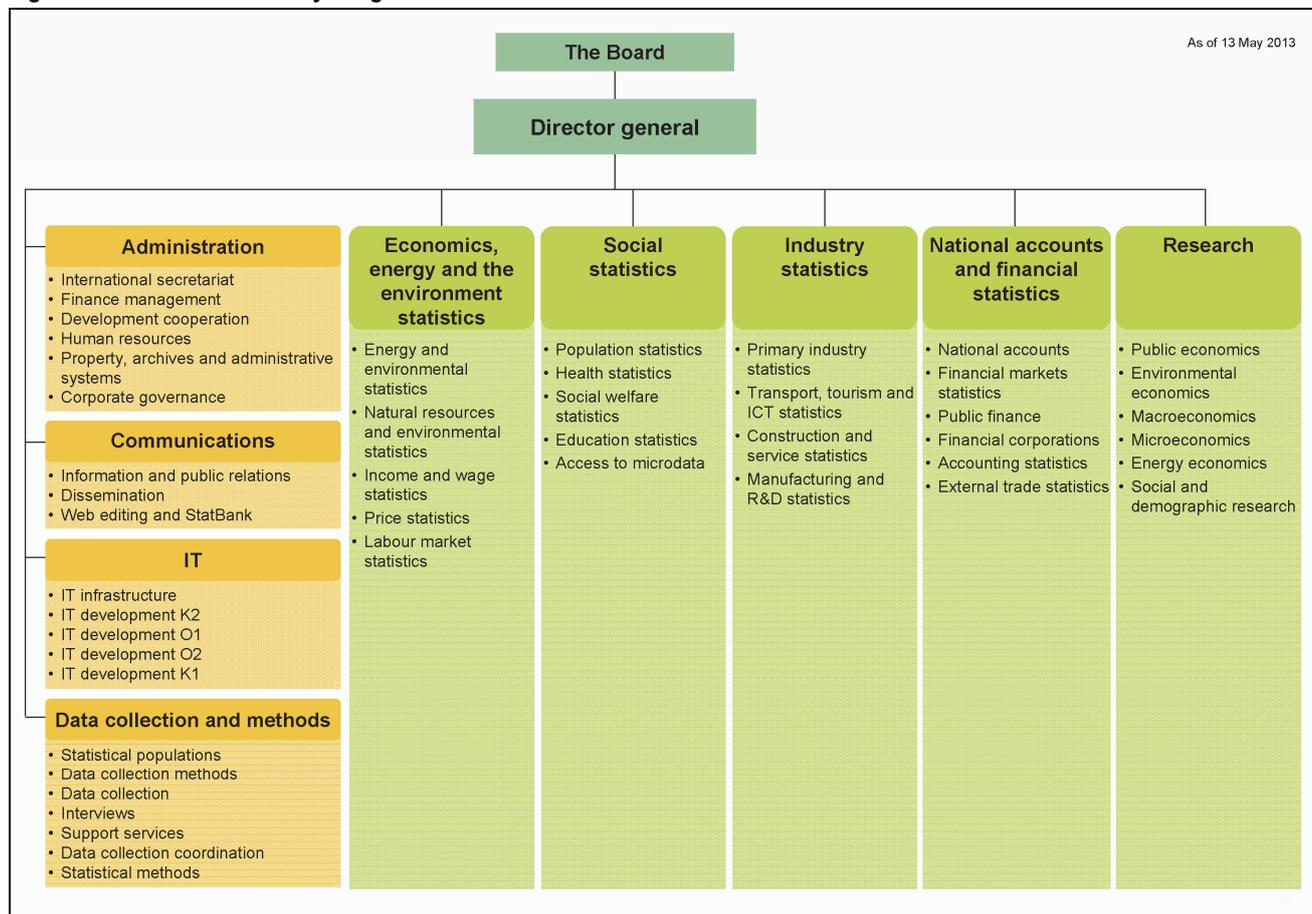
The project seemed successful in terms of developing statistical capacity within NSO, but the problems emerged when trying to publish the statistical products. The NSO was only allowed to publish their statistics within the government. Hence the statistical capacity did gain the government allowing for better resource allocation, but information remained only available for the direct users. It did not allow for an open policy discussion neither within the overall government nor by the national public at large. The fundamental principal of official statistics being available for all was broken and in 2011 the project was disbanded.

Our cooperation with the National Statistical Office in Eritrea is an example of how the broad social system in the country and lack of independence for the NSO made it impossible for continuous development of the statistical system even when the conditions for successful development were present within the institution itself.

6.7. Organising institutional cooperation in Statistics Norway

SN's Division for International Development Cooperation is placed in the Department for Administration and it involved in total about 23 person years in 2011. These are divided between 11 people employed full-time in the division in Oslo/Kongsvinger plus three LTAs abroad and one secondment to the UN. The remaining approximately 7 person-weeks are performed by staff from other divisions at SN on short term assignments.

Figure 5. Statistics Norway's organisational chart



Source: SN

The rationale of having a relatively large division for development cooperation is that we have learned that it is necessary to have knowledge and experience that goes beyond statistical competence and can follow the developments in the countries over time. One key element in good management of institutional development cooperation is to have competence on how to transfer knowledge in new cultural settings and to be able to adjust working methods to the local setting. It is also necessary to know about methods and international standards for statistics that are common in developing countries or countries in transition but not used in Norway.

In the Division for Development Cooperation the employees have more of this specialised experience since they work full time with development issues. With decades of international cooperation, there are a significant number of returned long term advisers and other people in other divisions who are experienced in working with development of capacity in other countries. SN's internal training school offers short courses open for all SN staff in languages, in working in other cultures and in working with development assistance to prepare SN's subject matter experts to act as short term advisers in the field.

6.8. Tools for monitoring progress and results

It is important to have tools that can help assess whether the plans and goals that were set when starting a project, were actually reached. In institutional cooperation projects, there are several levels of outcomes to be monitored. We can divide them into:

- Monitoring statistical production, quality, relevance and impact
- Monitoring capacity building and organisational sustainability
- Monitoring the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the cooperation project

To follow up on the “results agenda” promoted by the international and Norwegian development agencies, SN advises and assists partners to use Results Based Management (RBM) and logical models in planning, monitoring and evaluating cooperation projects. It has been a stepwise progress from focus on activities to focus on output and results. In the last years, MFA has provided courses in RBM for the Division for International Development Cooperation. Our experience is that all parties involved in the project benefit from using RBM, but that a critical point is making sure that the cooperation partner ownership actively owns the process.

By using these tools, the discussions about the projects are structured around central concepts that are necessary when planning and monitoring projects. To what extent the cooperation take advantage of the management processes varies with size of the project, as well as the needs, time and human resource capacity in both SN and the partner organisation.

RBM, and its relative Logical Framework Approach (LFA), have the advantage that they are well known tools in the international development community, being used by for instance different United Nations agencies, the World Bank and bilateral donors. By using them, we reduce the burden of adjusting to different demands from different donors. All staff members in the division are encouraged to have training in the use of these planning tools, but it is of particular importance for the home coordinators and long term advisers.

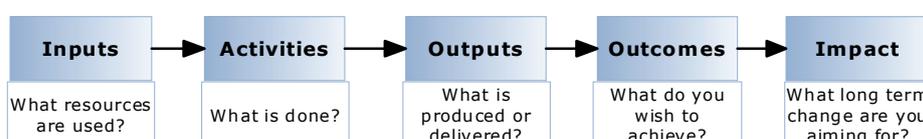
Results Based Management (RBM)

RBM at project level implies to begin with the end goals and objectives in the planning progress. It means reading the figure below from right to left in the planning stage.

The most important indicators chosen to measure success are connected to the outcomes. (As opposed to measuring activities.) This gives a much more flexible structure, which allows changes and adjustments of inputs and activities under way while learning which different inputs are more or less successful in achieving the various goals set. It does however take some time before an outcome can be measured. Activities and outputs are still measured to monitor the progress of the project and to support accounting.

To set a goal there has to be a starting point, which is referred to as a baseline. The baseline describes the situation at a given point in time from which the project shall move towards the goal. The indicators used in the baseline have to be comparable to the indicators used to see if the goal is reached.

The actual process is described as a results chain. The results chain is based on a number of assumptions. The assumptions are how or what outcomes will lead to the impact; what outputs will lead to the outcomes; which activities will lead to the outputs and what input is needed to undertake the activities. The assumptions should be analysed carefully. If the assumptions are wrong, the project is unlikely to lead to the goal in an efficient way. Analysing assumptions is part of risk analysis. Risk analysis is to identify the internal and external issues that may prevent the project from succeeding and to adjust the project to reduce the chances for failure.



6.9. Statistical Capacity Indicators

For statistics, much of the outputs are relatively simple to monitor: The production of statistics in the form of tables in reports or online databases is a clear indicator that the upstream work must have taken place. There are internationally agreed methodology for most of the work, which can be used as relevant indicators for quality.

There are also a large number of indicators for statistical capacity to use when we want to establish targets for our projects. Using these actively is a recent development in SN, reflecting that most of them are rather new. The one we have found most relevant is the Statistical Capacity Indicator (SCI) from the Bulletin Board on Statistical Capacity (BBSC). It is an internationally comparable index developed by the Development Data Group (DECDG) in the World Bank. The index measures statistical capacity of a large number of countries through a series of indicators grouped into methodology, source data and periodicity and timeliness.⁹

The SCI focuses on data only and does not use indicators measuring who did the job or the environment in which they work. It does therefore not cover all the information that is important for institutional cooperation, like whether the data was produced by the relevant NSO/Ministry, or another agency or an external consultant or whether or not the institution can do the work without external technical assistance. But though it has limitations, it is the only source of readily available internationally comparable information on statistical capacity, and as such useful for assessment of the situation.

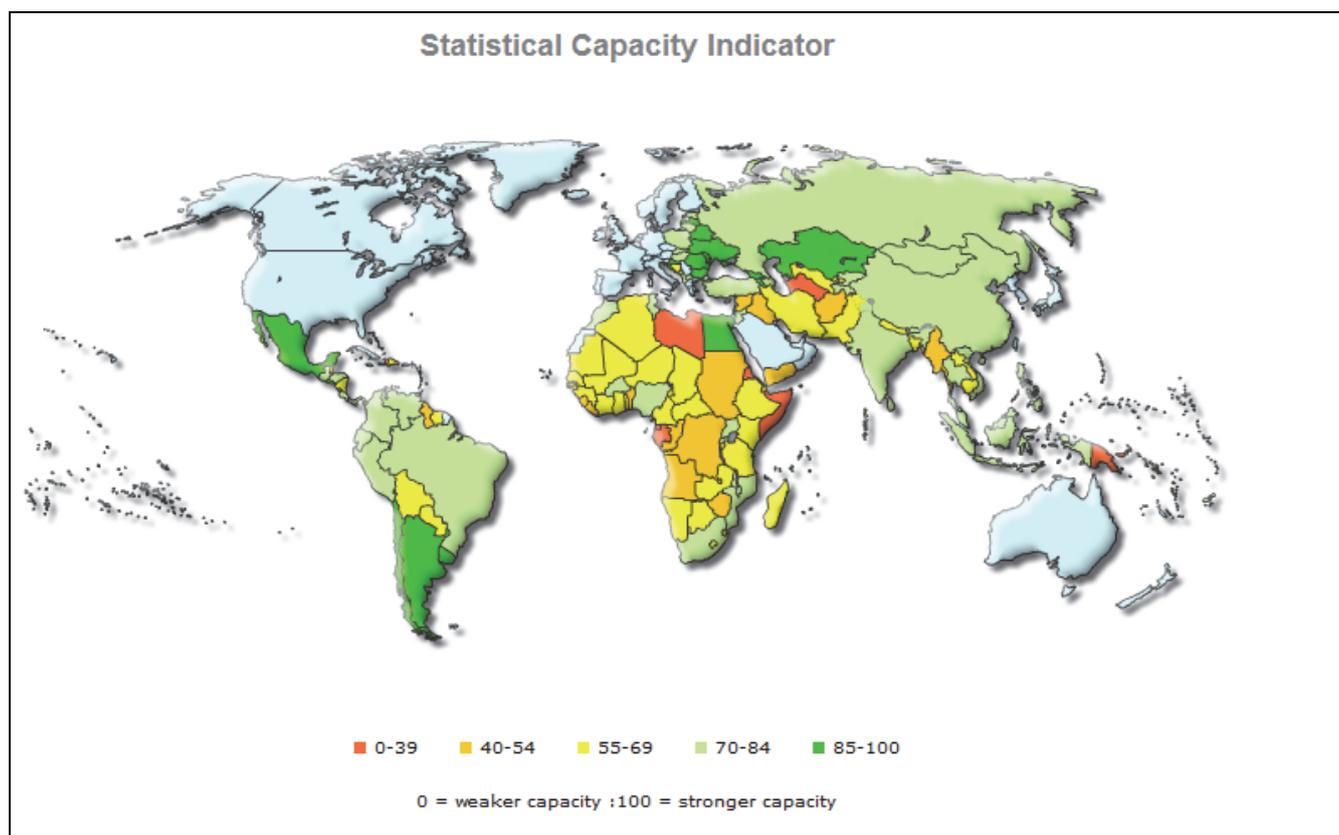
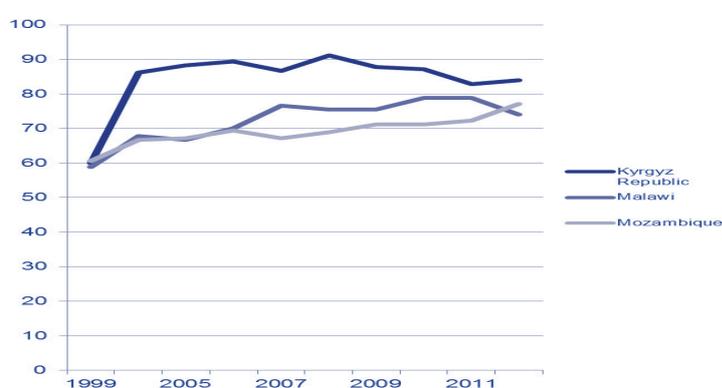


Illustration from <http://bbsc.worldbank.org/bbsc/SelectColorParameter>

⁹ Bulletin Board on Statistical Capacity is found on bbsc.worldbank.org.

The challenge of keeping status quo

The graph below illustrates the developments at the Statistical Capacity Indicator in three of SN's partner countries. It illustrates that reaching a new and higher level of capacity is not necessarily sustained. The SCI is divided into three parts; Statistical methodology, Periodicity and timeliness and Source data. A new statistical product can cause a significant jump, while a delay in a product previously produced can cause a fall. However, over time a steady growth and stability of the achieved levels is a good indicator for institutional development. In reality we see that while development is seen as improving on the present situation, just keeping up with the achievements is challenging enough. It is hard to keep levels up when external assistance is over, government has to finance data collection, the first team of trained local staff moves on to other jobs and other demands to the NSO are competing for attention. It is when the first years of enthusiasm is over and the daily production of a statistic at local budgets takes over, we see if there is real financial and institutional sustainability.



There are other attempts to measure capacity at statistical offices, but neither of those below are implemented with the results published online, like the SCI. They are however useful for SN, as we have to find indicators to monitor our own projects and the initiatives below have a large number to choose from.

The PARIS21 consortium developed a set of Statistical Capacity Building (SCB) indicators in 2002¹⁰, which gives us input to how to measure achievements. Along with data production and quality related indicators, the Paris21 task team also created indicators for staff qualifications, infrastructure, working environment, monitoring of the production process and dissemination.

There is also an African Statistical Development Index (ASDI), based in UNECA, which measures organisation and coordination of the National Statistical System (NSS), statistical infrastructure, data dissemination, human capital development and funding.¹¹

The World Bank further monitors the status of national strategies for development of statistics (NSDS). A main task for the NSO is to fulfil its assignments as stated in the NSDS. The NSDS therefore becomes another important source of indicators when we plan for institutional cooperation.

An important aspect when we monitor institutional cooperation is that the indicators and indexes mentioned above operate at a national or general NSO level. In other words; the results develop from all the efforts in the institution(s)

¹⁰ Laliberté, Lucie (chairperson) (2002) Statistical Capacity Building Indicators, Paris21

¹¹ African Statistical Development Index is found on ecastats.uneca.org/acsweb/trsf

involved; internal, national and in cooperation with a number of international partners. A few of these indicators are specific enough to be connected to our cooperation, but in most cases, our cooperation is only one of several contributions. In terms of planning and monitoring of the cooperation, it is important that the indicators we choose to monitor are concrete enough to see the difference.

6.10. Monitoring human resource capacity building

Institutional cooperation implies cooperation over time. The production of many types of statistics is cyclic. This means the same activities are being repeated several times. Our main way of measuring capacity building is to observe our partner becoming gradually less dependent on assistance from outside in organising and doing the actual work. An example would be that the partner institution organise trainings with their own staff as trainers in fields where they previously needed trainers from outside. When planning an activity, targets for local takeover are set.

High staff turnover in public institutions is a problem in many countries. It often leads to a need for the repetition of the same type of assistance. Especially during times when public institutions and international organisations are expanding and local, experienced and well-educated people are in high demand. Sustainability in such a setting means that we have to train more people than initially needed for a task and also train trainers. This is not a guarantee against setbacks, but can mitigate the problem.

Another measure of learning is a test after a training. Many participants in trainings appreciate to have a certificate that shows what they have learned. This has, however, not been used much by SN, as our direct work with the partner NSO is most often designed as on-the-job training.

6.11. Monitoring the cooperation

In addition to monitoring outcomes, we have to monitor how the cooperation itself is working. The main arena for evaluating our own cooperation is the annual meeting between SN and our partners. In this meeting results are discussed, timelines adjusted and plans for the next year are made. The annual reports usually focus on the targets and success indicators laid out in the initial plans using RBM/LFA management tools.

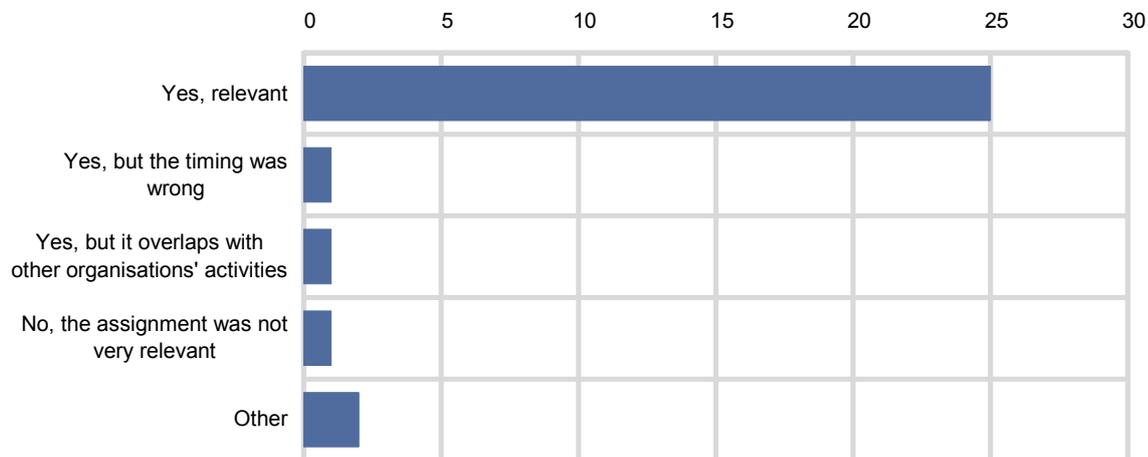
During the implementation of the project, progress towards set targets is monitored through progress reports, mission reports and documentation of processes. At this level, the monitoring is largely focused on the progress of the implementation of activities. However, whereas an activity like scanning a set of questionnaires can be ticked off easily as done (or not done), the outcome from a human resource workshop is less tangible. For such activities it is a goal to have the participants evaluate the outcome, sometimes using questions adapted from SN's internal evaluation system.

An important factor in monitoring the cooperation is the view from outside. Institutional cooperation projects in SN are reviewed or evaluated on a regular basis by external experts. This is normally initiated by the donor, but if it is not, we make sure it happens ourselves. The feedback obtained through these reviews are discussed and used as a basis for revising plans.

Survey from short term advisory assignments

In connection to writing this document, the division for development cooperation made an internal survey of experiences from short term advisory assignments. 27 people responded and two thirds of them had been on more than three short term assignments.

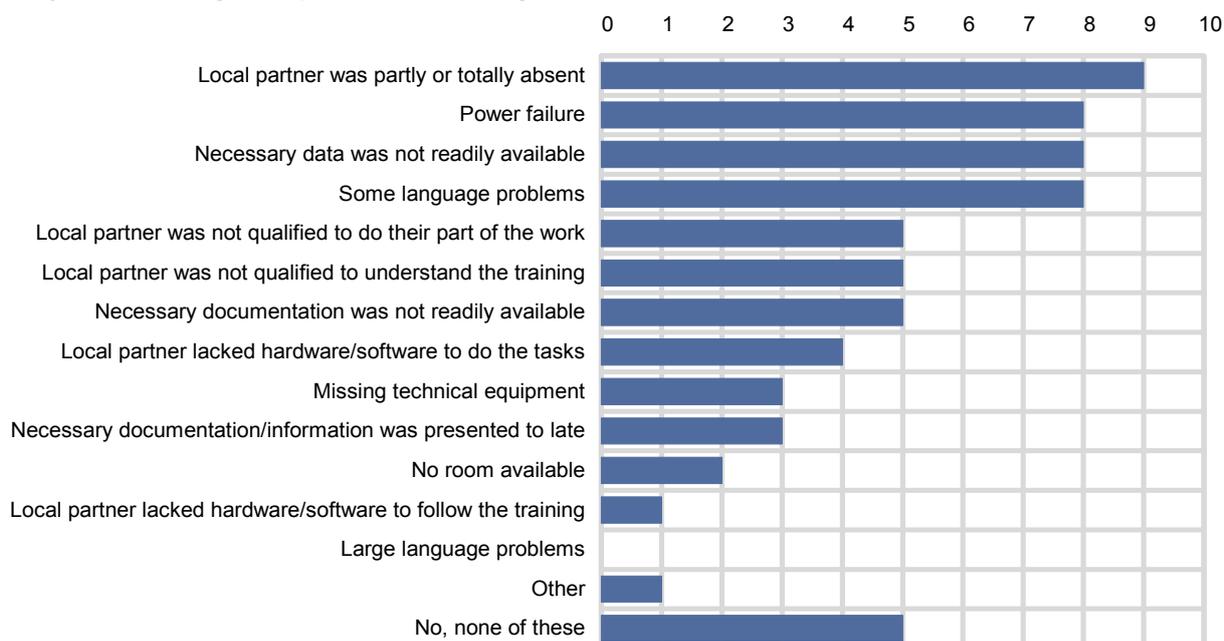
Did the assignment appear relevant to solve identified problems in the partner organisation?



At the end of the survey, the advisers were asked to list the most important factors for success. Good planning and good communication are the two main factors mentioned::

- to communicate the expectations of what the partner staff should contribute and ensure that the partner organisation is aware of this and want to do it
- to map the skills and time available for the staff in the partner organisation and see this against the tasks they are expected to do
- that the adviser is able to communicate with the local counterparts (overcoming language problems, cultural differences and adjusting to the subject matter skills level)
- enough time for the adviser to prepare and follow up properly
- plans for follow-up at the end of the assignment

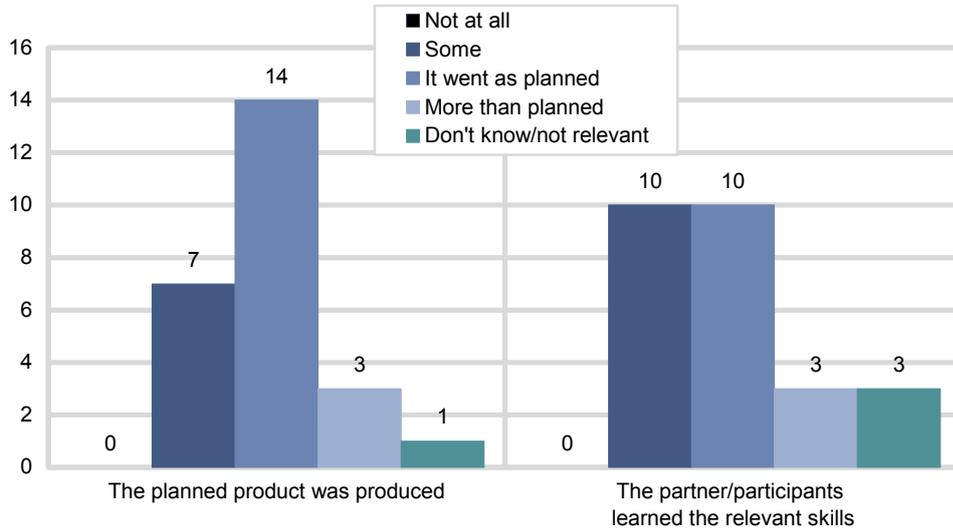
Did any of the following cause problems for the assignment?



Most answers confirmed the views we had gotten from previous individual feedback. The focus on planning supports the increasing emphasis we give to the preparatory phase of the projects. The communication issues confirm the need for someone working closely, often on site, with the partner organisation to fit the assignments into the practical, cultural and subject matter context. Our experience is that especially in those organisations with lowest capacity, this works best through a long term adviser.

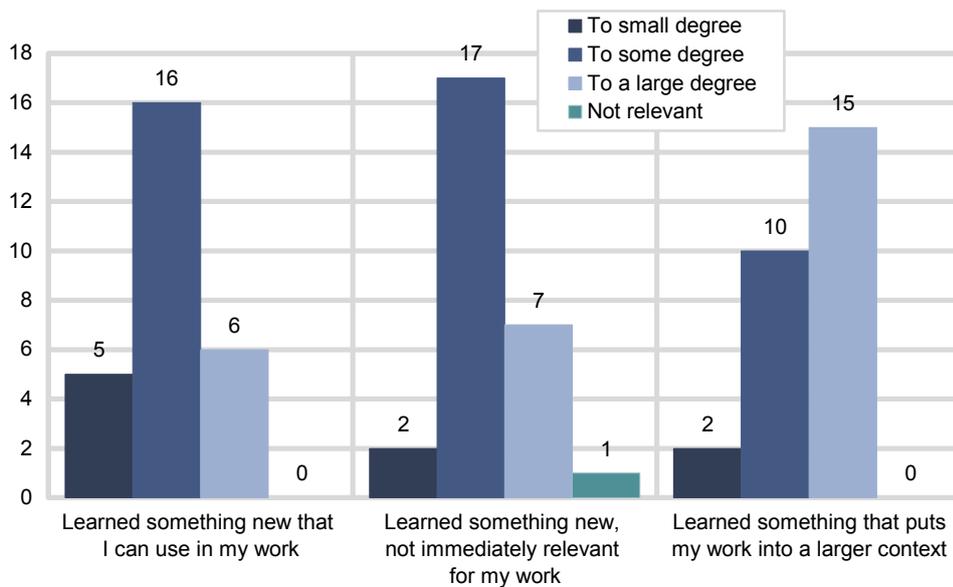
Although the survey reflected many challenges, the end results of the assignments were positive.

To what degree were the goals of the mission reached?



There is room for improvement in monitoring and in communication of monitoring results. A specific matter to look into is to collect feedback from the cooperation partner. Only four of the 27 respondents knew positively that the partner NSO had checked the outcomes from the mission.

What was your own professional outcome from the assignment?



The survey's main purpose was to identify areas of improvement in how we work, but there were also quite a few questions on how the advisers experience the assignments. We believe that giving staff members the opportunity to travel and work with other NSO's is an asset for Statistics Norway. And we seem to be right. 16 out of 17 who do not have this kind of work as their main job, said they would like to go on similar missions again.

7. The project phases

In this chapter we describe the different phases of a complete institutional development cooperation project in SN. Since our main goal in this work is contributing to development of sustainable local capacity for production and use of official statistics the timeframe for a complete cooperation is very long. About 10-15 years of cooperation is what we normally have in mind when entering into a full-fledged cooperation.

The 4 project phases described below relates to the whole lifetime of a development cooperation. However, it may be a bit confusing to think of our cooperation projects in these 4 phases because some of the activities are repeated in cycles of 3-4 years. This is related to the funding phases. Depending on the funding modalities either SN or the partner NSO apply for and get funding for a period of 3-4 years at a time. This means that project plans, budgets, work plans and evaluations will be repeated every 3 to 4 years.

The cooperation project can also be divided into sub-projects. Developing a national system for official statistics involves development of production systems for a wide range of statistical products within social statistics and economic statistics. Each of the production systems to be developed will have phases of planning, implementation, phasing out and completion in much the same manner as the complete cooperation programme.

When we look at the lifespan of an institutional cooperation project we find it useful to split it into four phases;

1. Initiation and pilot activities
2. Preparation and planning
3. Implementation
4. Phasing out and completion

7.1. Phase 1: Initiation and pilot activities

Institutional cooperation projects involving SN usually begin with a request for cooperation. These have most often arrived through one of two channels:

- The partner organisation contacts SN or the two institutions know each other from international fora and have initiated talks about a cooperation when meeting in one of these fora. There is a mutual understanding that some kind of cooperation could be beneficial. It may be that the institution is looking for a twinning partner, but it more often is that they have a specific skills issue they want help with. Sometimes the organisation already has funding for this type of technical cooperation, while in other cases they apply for funding separately or together with SN.
- The other channel is that a relevant high level politician, head of an NSO or a ministry in a country are in contact with the Norwegian Embassy or representatives of the Norwegian MFA and express an interest in a cooperation arrangement with SN. If the Norwegian Embassy is interested in promoting this type of activity, they pass on the request to SN.

Sometimes a cooperation begins and ends with a limited project, focussing on a specific area and involving only a few people. Other times, this develops to increased cooperation and becomes what we view as an institutional cooperation project. If the goal is institutional cooperation, then this is the initiation phase: When the institutions get to know each other.

A central element in this period for all parties is to understand the goals of the cooperating partners, how we are to work together and to also build trust. Spending some time and money on this phase can prevent misunderstandings and poor

results in the future. It is however often difficult to rise funding for this phase, as it does not result in concrete products like a survey or an analysis report.

Central in this phase is usually a visit from the partner organisation to SN in Norway and a visit from SN to the partner organisation. Typically, staff from the leadership of the organisations together with central persons working within the subject matter areas of interest are the participants of these visits.

Typically the next step is implementation of a project focusing on one technical area limited in time and scope. It can be a workshop, a study tour or some direct technical assistance (Sometimes this step is what initiates the request for more cooperation and then the high level visits mentioned as the previous step take place).

Norad has summarised experiences from institutional cooperation projects by looking at a selection of written evaluations and reviews from institutional cooperation projects in the period 1980 – 2008¹². They found that one common weakness is the *preparatory phase* of the projects. Lack of proper analysis of competence, capacity, needs, commitment and ownership, lack of baselines, and sustainability elements in the receiving institution were, according to the review, elements that need more attention before finalising the project plan for institutional cooperation and initiating a longer term project. To be able to see the cooperation possibilities it is important to have a clear picture of both strong and weak sides of the institutions entering into a cooperation relationship. Norad's evaluation finds that plans for cooperation projects are often too ambitious and not simple and smart.

If a cooperation is to move from ad-hoc technical assistance into an institutional cooperation, it must be properly anchored within both institutions. The initiation of such cooperation often comes from individuals with good intentions and ability to implement and get results. Institutional cooperation implies a move beyond these individuals: The project must function when individuals leave the organisations. Critical for this is that it is anchored at the very top level in the institution. In addition the middle management, especially within the technical fields of cooperation, must be involved and actually want the cooperation.

The outcomes planned for must also feed into the overall plans for that the partner organisation has. It is therefore important that the initial visits aim at mapping the needs for support, finding the gaps and communicating with stakeholders within and outside of the partner organisation. A central activity at this stage is to map the current status of the statistical system in the country to identify a baseline, i.e. quantity and quality of the statistical products; infrastructure and level of competence amongst staff etc. An overview of this information is not necessarily hard to access. It can be found in strategic plans for the NSO, the NSDS, and the Statistical Capacity Indicator, through reviewing statistical publications like the Statistical Yearbook and by talking to centrally placed individuals. The importance of mapping the current development level of the partner institution has however tended to be underestimated, while focussing more on a specific technical field.

¹² To summarise major experiences, Norad has studied several review and evaluation reports, written by external consultants; Report 1998:16 – directorates in institutional cooperation (by Statskonsult) (Only available in Norwegian), State-of-the-art study – the long term effects of assistance to the power sector – 2006 (by Nordic Consulting Group and Stein Hansen), Review of the Norwegian support to the energy sector in Uganda – 2006 (by Nordic Consulting Group), Evaluation of the Norwegian Petroleum-Related Assistance 1/2007 (by Danish Energy Authority and Copenhagen DC), Evaluation of Norwegian Power-related Assistance – 2/2007 (by Scanteam), Institutional cooperation in Norwegian development cooperation (by the Centre for Health and Social Development) (Only available in Norwegian), Review and synthesis of lessons learned from institutional cooperation and capacity building in the environmental sector in Norwegian development cooperation – 2008 (by Nordic Consulting Group)

It is also important that SN does a review of what effort is needed from SN's side and check that there are available human resources in SN to cover these activities. The fact that SN *can* assist in a field does not necessarily mean that the divisions with this knowledge are available to provide this support. Good communication is crucial to avoid frustration over expectations not met or broken promises.

The information collected forms a basis on which to decide if the organisations want to go to the next step: Institutional cooperation. If the answer is yes, it should be used as a guide when deciding the scope of the cooperation, main objectives and goals for a cooperation project, and it should be used as a guide in developing the project document.

Our experience over the years has been that this first initial stage of an institutional cooperation project often has not been given high enough priority (neither by the donor, nor the cooperation partner nor SN). The consequence of this lack of thorough evaluation has been that we later see that the project would be better if we would have focused on different areas first. Another consequence is misunderstandings around ownership and responsibilities between the partners that emerge later on.

Development of the system of national accounts in Malawi focusing too little on basic economic statistics

SN has had a development cooperation project with the NSO of Malawi since 2004. From the very start the cooperation was organized as a broad based institutional cooperation covering both social and economic statistics. This has included having a long term adviser responsible for each of these two main statistical areas located in Malawi.

In the first phase of the cooperation the focus was on developing the system of National Accounts (NA). What happened was that the resources needed to secure timely deliverance of key economic statistics were underestimated. Production of the Annual Economic Survey (AES) became the main bottleneck in producing the NA. Both the timeliness and the quality of the AES data were much poorer than what we assumed in the initial planning phase of the project.

In the second phase of the cooperation the project was reorganized focusing much more on developing capacity for production on basic economic statistics. Looking back, it is evident that with more knowledge of the actual development stage of the AES and other basic economic statistics in the NSO we would have planned for more technical assistance in this area from the beginning rather than having a focus on the NA in the early phase.

A summary of major activities and outputs in the initiation and pilot activities phase of the project:

Activities

- Visit each other's institutions to get to know each other and the statistical system in the countries
- Short term assignments within one or few technical fields
- Communicating about the importance of statistics with the cooperating institution and other relevant institutions in the developing country.
- Evaluate the current status to be used as a guide for developing the project.
- Based on the status report, agree on the main objectives and goals for a cooperation project.
- Assess own organisation's (being SN) competence and capacity to go into the relevant institutional development cooperation.

Outputs

- A status report with proposed indicators for evaluating progress
- Experiences from (pilot) technical cooperation
- Agreement/a common understanding of goals for a institutional cooperation project for all parties involved

7.2. Phase 2: Preparation and planning

To be able to measure progress made and success of a cooperation project, it is essential to include in the evaluation a set of indicators, and measure the level of these indicators at the starting point.

The term “Quality at entry” implies the importance of using resources in the early preparatory phase of the project to assure a well founded project where all involved parties have a thorough and common understanding of the objectives for the project, and that the ownership is placed at top management level in the cooperating institution. Activities at this stage would involve advocating for statistics to potential users in the cooperating country. An important group to involve at an early stage is the intermediate policy makers in the country. Effort should be put in to networking within the cooperating institution and other relevant institutions in the developing country involved in building statistical capacity.

When we have established a starting point or a baseline and all parties involved have a common understanding of the main goals for the cooperation project, it is time to develop the actual project plan. The project plan should be developed by the cooperating institution, with SN only as advisors. We have seen that when enough time is allowed for the cooperation institution to take charge in the development of the project plan, working closely with SN, it ensures a good understanding, ownership and commitment to the project goals.

One important lesson learned is that the persons who will be in charge of the project implementation from both SN and the partner NSO side should be involved in the planning phase. In this phase, SN is usually in a good position to advice and guide the partner organisation on the recommended planning models and formats to use in the project document, also seen from the potential donor side.

INE Angola – The importance of trust

In the end 90s, the Director General (DG) of the national statistical office (INE) in Angola, Mr Mario de Sousa visited Norway and Statistics Norway upon the invitation from the Norwegian Ambassador. The visit was followed by a consultancy contracted by UNDP to analyse survey data on poverty. This established close links and Statistics Norway assisted INE to draft a program of cooperation in 2001 covering both economic and social statistics. Unfortunately the DG of INE did not have the full support of the Minister of Planning and she replaced him during an absence of leave for studies by the head of national accounts as a new president. The new DG soon fired the head of the dynamic social survey unit and the deputy then left. Neither Statistics Norway nor the Embassy managed fully to rebuild trust. Hence Statistics Norway and the DG of INE with the approval of the Embassy agreed upon a focus on technical issues. Based upon our ideal approach of INE being accountable to the Embassy at an annual meeting, long term advisers, study visits and short term expert managed jointly to build the capacity for annual economic statistics, economic surveys, and social surveys. But the surveys yielded different figures from the existing ones and the DG of INE was never able to convince the Minister of Planning about the improved quality of the new surveys and was himself replaced by his deputy. Neither the Embassy nor Statistics Norway were able to discuss the problems with the Ministry. The relationships between all actors soured and the program of cooperation was closed. However, some capacity was definitely built; technical capacity in INE, while Statistics Norway managed to build some Portuguese language capacity and learn the need to withdraw when trust is missing.

In 2011 the last DG passed away and was replaced by the third (and last) member of the former dynamic social survey team, Mr Camilo Ceita. The trust is back, but new Norwegian financial support has yet to become available.

A challenge we have experienced when working in institutional development cooperation projects is that this activity is treated as an ad hoc stand alone project in line with projects that have a much more narrow objective such as a one-term survey. In these cases we have failed in communicating the essence of broad based institutional development cooperation. This form of cooperation must function as an umbrella project where all other projects and activities are aligned.

Regular production of statistics vs occasional large surveys or censuses

In most of our partner countries the availability of administrative registers are very limited. The alternative is to collect data through large surveys such as population censuses or household surveys. Such surveys are enormous operations. All data must be collected in the field and we have many times seen how all staff in an NSO are taken out of their regular work for many months to take part in field work for a specific survey. Even if these censuses and large surveys are necessary and important to conduct, these hamper the development and production of regular statistics (monthly/quarterly) and for institutional cooperation projects aiming at development of capacity for day-to-day production of regular statistics these large operations are a bottleneck hampering progress.

In order to limit the negative effects of these large operations, it is crucial to account for these types of occasional large surveys when planning an institutional cooperation program. Since these types of large stand-alone surveys or censuses often are supported by international organisations like the World Bank, good coordination and communication amongst all organisations supporting statistics in a partner country is necessary both in the initial planning phase and during the course of the cooperation.

SN has experienced that it is also important to incorporate all other relevant players when planning for and working in an institutional development cooperation project aiming at developing statistical capacity. Even if the institution itself has ownership and dedication to achieve institutional development and higher statistical capacity, it can be that other government institutions, donor agencies, international organisations, etc. do not have the same commitment.

Summary of activities and outputs in the preparation and planning phase of the project:

Activities

- Prepare the main Project document. This work should be led by the cooperation partner, guided by SN and the possible Donor.
- Define the roles and responsibilities of the project partners (is part of the project document)
- Prepare and agree on specific job descriptions for the various work tasks outlined in the project document
- Recruit experts from SN(long term and short term)
- Formulate the use of and signing of formal contracts
- Advocate for statistics to potential users in the cooperation country. This activity should be done primarily by the cooperating institution, but SN would normally assist and guide our partners.
- Develop indicators for measuring progress made during and at the end of the cooperation project.

Outputs

- Project document
- Job descriptions – Terms of reference (ToR)
- Action plans
- Training programmes
- Budgets

7.3. Phase 3: The Implementation phase

In a development cooperation project involving one institution from a developed country and one institution from a developing country with a different culture, the challenge of making sure that information is available and understood is massive. Over the many years that SN has been cooperating with institutions in developing countries, we have learned that a major factor for failure, delays or errors underway in projects has been due to lack of information or misunderstanding of information. To make sure that information is available and interpreted correctly it is important to have a clear picture of who is responsible for giving different types of information, to whom it is necessary to give the information (i.e. to top management in the cooperating institution, to donor(s), to project coordinator, to counterpart, etc.) and in what form (i.e. written letter, e-mail, by phone or directly in a formal meeting or informally).

Flow of information

- Our cooperation partners in developing countries often have a more hierocratic structure than SN and it is important to respect and use the correct channels when giving information. The more it is possible to agree on and write down in the terms of reference for the different actors in the project and in the project document the easier it will be to get a good flow of information
- Too much information is better than too little.
- Communication through e-mail is a common way of giving information in a developed country like Norway. In many developing countries this way of communicating may not be as common as we are used to and/or the systems may be instable. Information sent only by e-mail may be lost or misunderstood.
- Close professional relations between the project members is even more important when cultures are different and hence the probability for misunderstandings are bigger than it would have been if working with a Norwegian partner.
- The LTA is a key tool in transferring information and making sure it is interpreted correctly. When working across cultures there will always be times when information comes across in a wrong way or it is insufficient. If the awareness of the culture differences are high and the relations are close and there is mutual respect, it is easier to avoid misunderstandings and conflicts. An important task for the LTA should be to work as a communicator between the cooperation partners

The various sub-projects or modules¹³ in an institutional cooperation project do not all have to begin at the start of the cooperation, and most importantly; they may have been taken over by the partner a long before the overall cooperation is being phased out. These modules, and in particular those that have been successfully taken over by the partner institution while the overall cooperation project is still fully active may provide useful lessons for how to achieve technical sustainability. Modules that are phased out early in the cooperation should be properly analysed, both to identify success factors that can be transferred to other sub-projects that start later, and to identify sustainability challenges that can be handled during the remainder of the project.

The technical assistance provided by the developed country partner is usually the core of an institutional cooperation project. Various modalities may be used in delivering competence. For specific modules, like establishing new statistical production lines, a typical modality is to assign a long term adviser to the developing partner institution for a period of one to two years. The long term adviser assists the partner institution in building up the new statistical tools, and also usually follows the first implementation of the new product closely. Then, the technical assistance may be gradually reduced, by replacing the LTA with short term missions and/ or study visits, until the production line is taken over by the partner institution with minimum assistance, for example per e-mail or per telephone.

Summary of activities and outputs in this phase of the project:

Activities

- Long term technical missions
- Short term technical missions
- Short term coordination missions

¹³ See information about modules on page xx

- Coordination of project activities
- Implementation of planned activities
- On-the-job training
- Short term courses
- Subject matter work shops
- Regular reporting on progress
- Annual meetings

Outputs

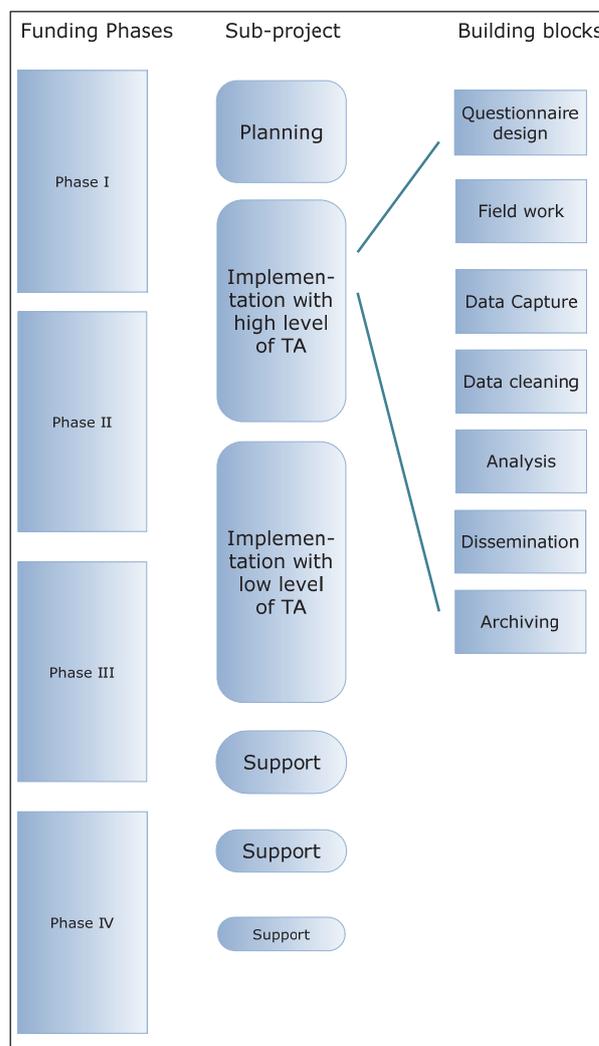
- Regular progress reports from LTA
- Project progress reports
- Mission reports from short term missions
- Annual or semi annual progress reports
- Annual or semi annual planning reports
- Annual or semi annual work plans
- Statistical and analytical reports
- Documentation reports

Funding phases versus sub-projects

In this document, we talk of phases in relation to the entire cooperation period: Initiation phase, preparation, implementation and phasing out phase. In SN we also use the word phase for funding phases. Either SN or the partner NSO receive funding for a specific period of time, for instance three years. However, this period may not have a natural beginning and end connected to activities, given that institutional cooperation typically lasts longer than one funding period. Within these phases, it is important to look at the activities and capacity building goals as separate entities. We have decided to call the cooperation relating to a specific task (production of a specific type of statistics or development of capacity in a specific field) for sub-project. Sub-projects may be shorter or longer than the time period for funding. The important part is that while the institutional cooperation goes on for a long time, there have to be developments where the partner organisation needs gradually less support to these sub-projects.

A sub-project can for instance be a survey. The measurement of success in the cooperation is that the NSO is able to undertake more and more of the tasks involved without external technical assistance. Since a survey is a large task, it might be unrealistic with full local takeover after the first round of implementation. We therefore break the sub-project down into building blocks. This means that for every repetition of the survey, more and more building blocks must be fully implemented by the NSO.

There might however be that the most sustainable solution for some tasks is that the NSO bases its activities on outsourcing a task in the foreseeable future. Staff turnover and capacity constraints may make it unrealistic to keep up local expertise in the specific task. SN’s approach to such tasks is to emphasise that the NSO has to have enough competence to explain the process involved, but not necessarily do it without assistance. Such tasks could be advanced analyses done with several years in between (like food security or poverty analysis based on consumption data) or IT support that happens occasionally, where the expertise is too expensive to have in-house.



Source: SN

7.4. Phase 4: Phasing out and completion

Much more focus has been given to pre-entry and mid-term assessments of projects than to the monitoring of phasing out practices. Often phasing out strategies do not even exist and few guidelines exist about how to phase out a project in a successful manner. Rather, both the developed and the developing institutions frequently know little about how phasing out issues are discussed and managed outside their own institutions.

Obviously, phasing out should only take place when the cooperation has rendered sustainable outcomes. However, most cooperation projects are phased out, often unilaterally by the donor country, before sustainability has been fully achieved, for political reasons, or because project funding expires. Some exits are also of a “force majeure” type, usually due to strained political relations, or insecure conditions in the developing country, executed by a unilateral cancellation of contracts. A milder, but related phasing out, is to conduct an “accelerated phasing out” process, by advancing the cooperation project’s closing date. Still, the most common, mutually agreed case is the “natural” phasing out in the sense that previously agreed plans and timelines are adhered to.

Examples of justifications for unilateral phasing out decisions by a donor country are that the recipient can manage without aid, or that violations of good governance standards are too severe, or that funds are mismanaged. Sometimes, the phasing out is a mere consequence of revised criteria for selecting partner countries.

The future prospects for the partner organisation when the cooperation ends obviously depend on sustainability. The focus in the phasing out period is therefore how to ensure sustainability once the formal cooperation is over. As a minimum requirement, “sustainability” may be defined as the ability to maintain progress already achieved. This may be the more realistic aim for some countries. Preferably, “sustainability” also entails the ability to continue along a path of steady progress, even if it is at a rather slow pace.

Sustainability is needed along several dimensions, among which the most important in a statistical institutional cooperation are:

- Technical sustainability (maintaining skills)
- Financial sustainability (credible, predictable funding)
- Managerial/ organisational sustainability (ability to produce, if funding is available and the staff has the skills)

What is required in due time before an institutional cooperation is being phased out, is thus to identify and thoroughly analyse non-sustainability risks, and to develop corresponding mitigation measures while the project is still fully active and can allocate resources accordingly. The strategy for phasing out the institutional cooperation project must thus be developed as part of the cooperation plan. Implementation of the phasing out and completion phase should begin at least 1- 2 years before the formal conclusion of the project.

If the technical sustainability of the developing institution turns out to be low in spite of employing many of the mitigation efforts discussed above, one may seriously consider simplifying some vulnerable statistical products and production lines. This implies making a conscious decision to reduce product quality in a controlled manner, rather than risking an uncontrolled deterioration at a subsequent stage. This process may be challenging and often requires outside assistance to function well. Once again, early intervention increases the likelihood of a successful outcome.

Phasing out an institutional cooperation project means to reduce and finally end the formal advisory role of SN. The result should be that the partner organisation can do their work without technical assistance. First step in phasing out is to go from

dependency on technical long term advisers to more infrequent technical support through short term missions or online communication.

Some institutional cooperations involve only technical advice from SN. These are usually in middle income countries, which have funded their own activities themselves throughout the cooperation. In other countries there has also been funding for activities involved. This funding must be continued or replaced when the institutional cooperation is over. A natural, though not always easy, next step is for the NSO to move to some sort of basket funding where all donor support for statistics goes into one common fund. The NSO can then continue activities and pay for the external technical assistance they find necessary in a coordinated way.

There is often an advantage if an “in-country-statistician” at the NSS level is available at this stage. This person may assist the NSO in making priorities for further development of the National Statistical System, assist in working out tenders, and also to judge the relevance and quality of offers for technical assistance. Hence, keeping an “in-country-statistician” longer than the duration of the core institutional cooperation project may be a useful mitigation measure.

Summary of activities and outputs in this phase of the project:

Activities

- Focus turned towards consolidation of achieved capacities and avoiding initiating new sub-projects.
- Ensure that proper documentation of sub-projects has been developed and train the partner institution staff in using the documentation.
- Make an analysis of alternative providers of technical assistance and encourage and assist the partners in establishing its own networks for technical cooperation.
- Support capacity building for in-house training, for instance through an in-house statistics school
- Support management development and coordination of the NSS

Outputs

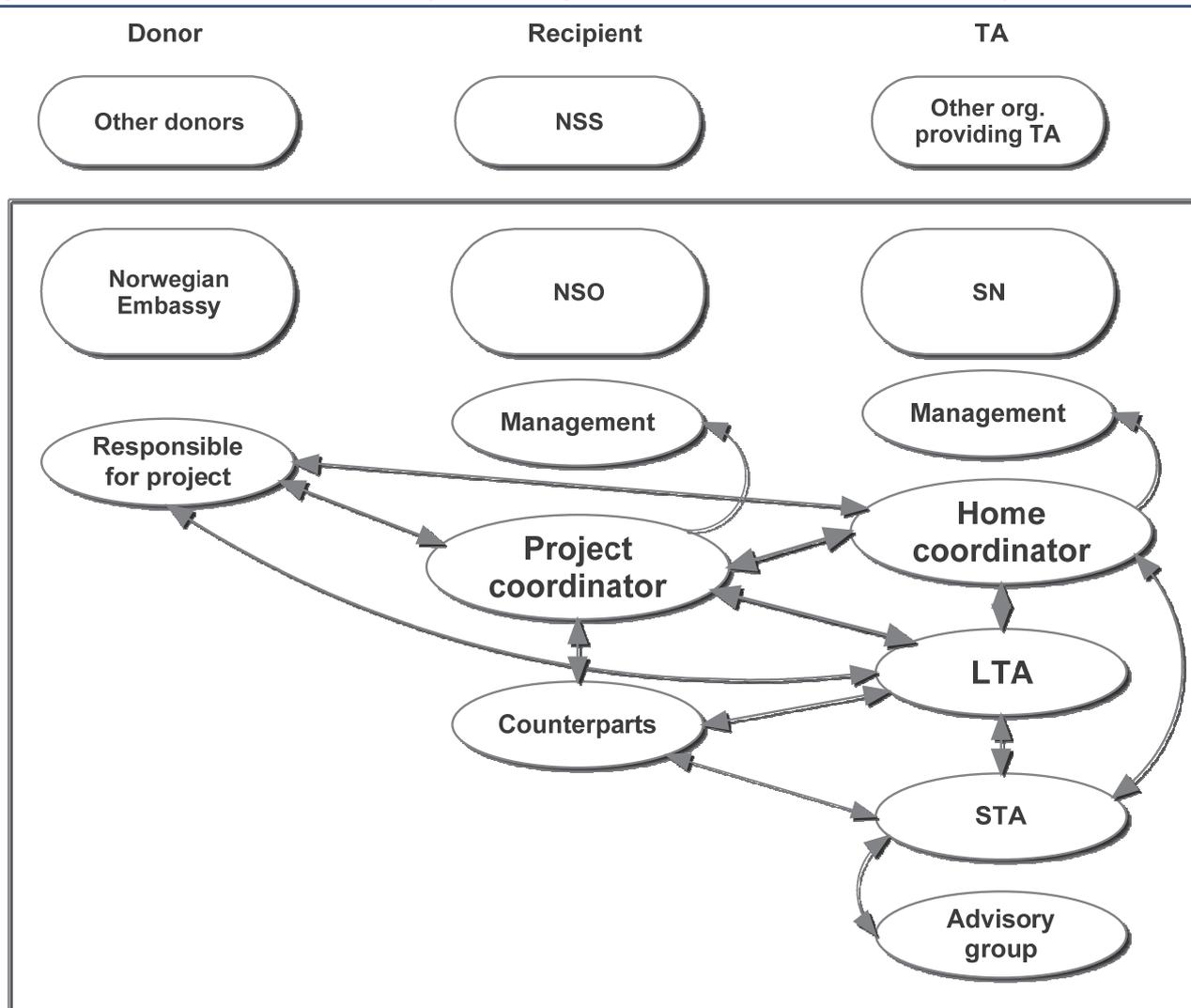
- Documentation of systems developed
- End reports from all parties
- Independent review or impact evaluation
- Technical sustainability and strategies aligned with financial capacity

8. Roles and responsibilities

The cooperation, as described above, breaks down into a large number of individual tasks that have to be distributed between the organisations and among the staff within the organisations. There is no absolute solution to how this is best done. It depends on conditions like financial resources, human resources in both SN and the partner organisation and other stakeholders' activities. Figure 6 illustrates the communication lines between the key roles and institutions in a SN institutional cooperation project.

Communication is crucial for a well functioning project. All parties should do what they can to contribute to a flow of information, both within and between the two institutions. Communication is one of the most important tools to increase the transparency in the project and thereby reduce both general and cultural misunderstandings.

Figure 6: Communication lines between the key roles and organisations in an institutional cooperation project



Source: SN

In the following chapters we describe the various roles and responsibilities in more detail. This is a starting point used in SN and will vary somewhat in various projects depending on what is found most suitable. In a specific institutional cooperation project the roles and responsibilities of the different individuals will be specified into Terms of References agreed upon by all parties involved.

8.1. Management in Statistics Norway

The management at SN, both the top level and the head of development cooperation, are important in the process of initiating cooperation projects. This is usually achieved through contacts in the international statistical community or with the MFA and Norad. It is therefore important that they participate at international meetings, follow up on other international initiatives for development of statistical capacity in developing countries and that they make sure that SN plays a role on the international agenda.

It is also important to follow up on the different cooperation projects, both on a day to day basis and through annual meetings, study visits to Norway etc. Specific tasks for the head of development cooperation are to coordinate and prioritise the use of resources within the division and to recruit and follow up on personnel in Norway and abroad.

8.2. Management in partner organisation

The management in the partner NSO is crucial for the development of project plans as they have the overview over the partner organisation and know where support and input is needed. As the top level of the organisation they also need to know how the project progresses and therefore be in regular contact with the LTA and the home coordinator. They also play an important role at annual meetings, being the spoke persons for the partner organisation.

Within the project some part of the management is often directly involved in the project through the roles as project coordinator and/or main contact person for the LTA from SN. Regular meetings between the management and the LTA are in any case advisable as this increases ownership and a common understanding of the project. It can also reduce project related and cultural misunderstandings.

In addition, the management has an important task in assigning the right people to the different project modules by coordinating and prioritising the use of human and technical resources. This also involves the coordination of the efforts of the different international donor projects at the institution.

8.3. Home Coordinator in Statistics Norway

The home coordinator is responsible for following up on all project activities in the country/project. This involves, among others:

- coordinate the work with project plans and budgets with the project manager in the partner organisation
- mobilise colleagues for short term missions and facilitate the communication between these experts and their counterparts in the partner organisation
- function as the contact person in SN and provide administrative support for the LTA
- communicate regularly with the donors and other important stakeholders
- organise study visits to SN

Independent of a funding modality where SN or our partner organisation is responsible for reporting on progress, funds used and plans, the home coordinator plays an important role in the development and follow-up of project plans and budgets. Having some distance to the everyday work in the NSO, we believe he/she is in a best position for keeping the overview over the project and the long term goals in the project. The home coordinator therefore also plays an important role in securing that the goals set are reached.

How comprehensive the responsibility of the home coordinator is, depends on the funding modality. If the funds are allocated to SN, the home coordinator is the main responsible for project plans and budget and the one who is reporting to

donors. If the funds are allocated to the NSO, the home coordinator will not be the main responsible, but shall never the less assist the cooperation partner with the outline of project plans and budget and to reach the goals set for the project.

The ToR, for short and long term missions are preferably written by the partner organisation, usually with input from the expert on the topic. It is however the responsibility of the home coordinator to keep the ToR up to date. The home coordinator will, together with the *SN contact person*¹⁴, identify the experts for the different missions and help the short term advisers prepare for their technical missions in the partner organisation. This involves practical preparations like information about hotel reservations, obtaining visas etc, but also informing the experts about the project history, local customs like dress code, hierarchy, political situation etc.

The home coordinator shall also facilitate study visits to SN. This involves the practical issues related to inviting the experts from the partner organisation and preparing the program for the visit. Often the visit is on one specific statistical field and the home coordinator will then work together with the division responsible to prepare the technical part of the programme.

The home coordinator has the responsibility to inform SN management about project activities, and to make sure that this work is well coordinated with other relevant projects in SN. The home coordinator shall also have direct communication with the donor, independent of donor model. However, what is crucial is that the cooperation partner is aware of the communication line, and can act accordingly.

Open communication is always positive

Previously, our model for institutional cooperation projects was so that SN and the home coordinator did not communicate directly with the Norwegian Embassy in the partner country. The thought was that SN's role as a trusted advisor to the NSO could be jeopardised through direct communication with the donor (The Norwegian Embassy) not always going through the NSO. However, years of experience has showed that having a communication line from SN to the project administrator at the Embassy can be a very helpful tool in assuring good communication and understanding between the partners involved in the cooperation project.

In addition to the concrete tasks mentioned, the home coordinator shall seek to keep an overview of what is going on in the country and region he/she is responsible for. This involves following the political development, what other donors within statistics and related fields are doing and be up to date on international decisions that may be of use for the project.

The main contact point for the home coordinator in the cooperating institution is the project coordinator and the LTA stationed in the cooperating institution. In addition to regular contact with these by e-mail and phone, the home coordinator also visits the partner institution and country for the annual meeting. If the project is large, there will be other administrative trips. The home coordinators in SN are also working with technical advice and often work with the partner organisation on technical issues. This is beneficial because personal contacts are strengthened and the cultural and political knowledge deepened.

The tasks of the home coordinator are many and sometimes diffuse. It is therefore recommended to develop specific ToR for the home coordinator on each

¹⁴ Division for Development Cooperation has assigned one person to coordinate the communication with the other divisions in Statistics Norway about technical assistance to all the different projects.

institutional cooperation project. The ToR should contain a list of all tasks with important deadlines and be updated annually. The existence of such a ToR eases the break-in costs for a new project coordinator.

8.4. Project Coordinator in the partner organisation

The project coordinator in the partner organisation has many of the same tasks as the home coordinator in SN. He/she is responsible for the follow up of project activities agreed in the project document, facilitating expert missions to the partner organisation and study visits to SN. In cooperation projects where the partner organisation is the recipient of the funds directly, the project coordinator is responsible for the planning and following up of project documents and budgets and to report back to the donor on progress made and the financial status.

The project coordinator is the main contact person for the project in the partner organisation. To assure that the cooperating organisation is in the driver seat of the project, SN believes it is imperative that this person is amongst the top management in the organisation, and that he/she has been a key person from the early planning stage of the project. Ideally, the project coordinator should be the same person who is in charge of actually making the project document and applying for funds.

It is also of great importance that the project coordinator feels ownership and is personally engaged in the development of the partner organisation and its employees. This is another argument for choosing a person who has been with the organisation for some time and who possibly also belongs to the top management.

The project coordinator is the main counterpart for the home coordinator at SN. As mentioned above, they share a lot of the tasks and need to work close together on many different issues. Who has the main responsibility depends on the funding modality, but either way it is important that the communication between the two is good. Independent on funding modality, SN should strive to give the project coordinator as much responsibility as possible as this is a part of the institutional and human resource development.

The project coordinator can also have the role of being the principal counterpart to the long term adviser, but this varies depending on the area of competence and position of the two parties in the organisation. The long term adviser often operates on a somewhat more technical and operational level than the project coordinator does, and would have a principal counterpart being the head of the subject matter area in question (i.e. head of economic statistics, head of demography, head of social statistics etc.).

As for the home coordinator at SN, it is also helpful to define a ToR for the project coordinator in the partner organisation.

8.5. The Long Term Adviser

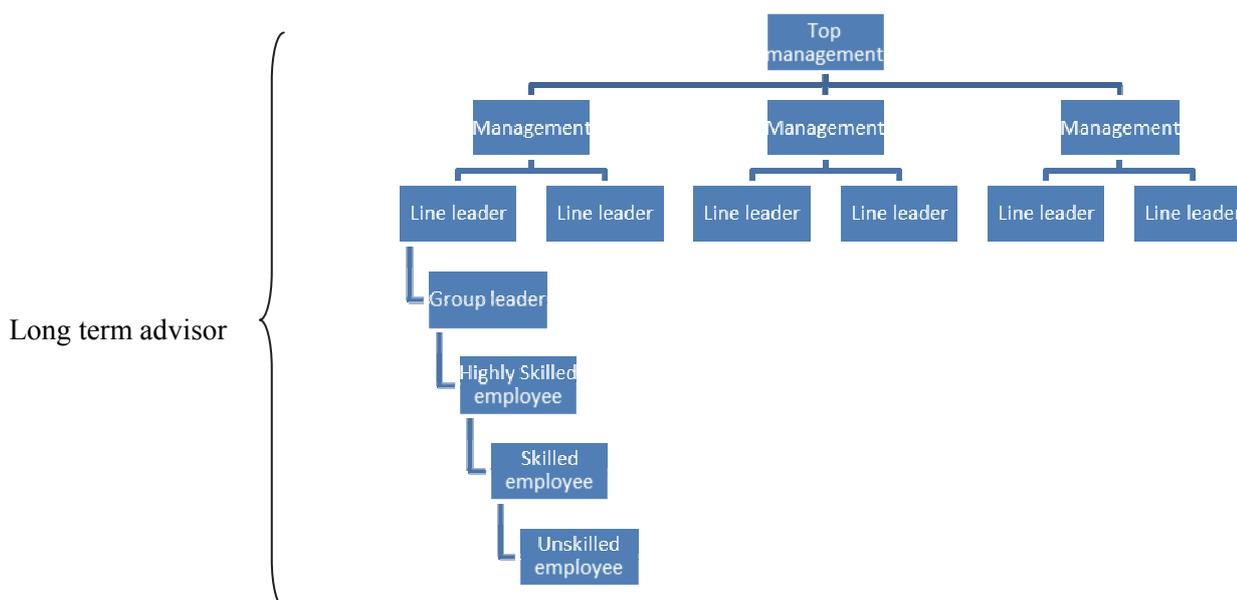
An LTA in SN's development cooperation projects is assigned to work in the cooperating institution, usually for 1-3 years. The ideal person assigned has both extensive experience from SN on one or more statistical areas and strong interpersonal and communicative skills. He/she will normally have one main counterpart on the lower managerial level (line leader).

A key document for the LTA is the ToR for the advisor's work. Often the work involves giving technical advice on a rather broad subject matter area to the partner organisation, i.e. within the area of Economic statistics, National accounts, Social statistics, etc. In addition there are a lot of other, non subject matter work tasks including project coordination and IT related issues. This is especially the case in countries where the statistical office is new or on a low level of development. This

should be specified in the ToR and emphasised on early both by the management and home coordinator at SN. The home coordinator should also seek to give as much information on the partner organisation in advance as possible; this involves national statistical strategies, project plans and county specific issues.

The multiple roles assigned to the LTA in practice means that he/she has to interact and work closely with staff at all levels in the organisation, from top management to staff with very little or no skills in statistics. This is the case even if the formal counterpart for the LTA is placed on the managerial level within the subject matter area of interest. The LTA should also seek to have regular meetings with the top management together with his project manager counterpart informing them about project progress, important plans and challenges met.

Organizational working levels for the long term consultant in the cooperating institution



Source:SN

An institutional cooperation project is often aiming at covering a wide range of areas, and the LTA's role is often a mix of giving advice on one or several subject matter areas and to help coordinate and follow up activities on other areas. One important aspect of the advisor's role is that he/she is there to support the cooperating institution. Hence, the advisor would mainly work for them and not for SN or the donor. This does not mean that the long term adviser only communicates and reports to the partner organisation, but in order to establish common trust and understanding it is crucial that this organisational structure is clearly communicated and respected.

A specific result of this is that the LTAs do not make any financial decisions on behalf of SN, nor approve applications or ToR's. These must be forwarded to either SN in Norway or to the management of the cooperating partner, depending on financing modality.

SN emphasises that the LTAs in our cooperation projects must be an advisor and a trainer, and not a gap-filler. It is often a big challenge for the long term adviser to prioritise between training staff in doing the job and doing it for them. Having pressure from the donor side and also from the cooperating institution on showing results in terms of visible products makes this a difficult priority, even if it is

commonly accepted fact that in order to build a sustainable system for regular production of quality statistics you need to focus on transfer of knowledge and building competence in the cooperating institution.

One of the main advantages of working within long term institutional cooperation programs is that this is a good frame for having an adviser stationed for a longer period since it makes it possible to have a long planning horizon for building competence and hence assure sustainability. It gives time to transfer knowledge from the LTA, and other SN staff engaged in the project, to staff members in the cooperating institution. SN's approach is first to help plan and develop i.e. a production system, then to assist in implementing the new system through hands-on-training and guidance and then to let the cooperating institution do the job alone. This implicates that the form of cooperation changes along the way of a program that runs over several years. One key task for an LTA is to pave the road for the two cooperating institutions to build strong relations and hence sustainable networks.

An important quality for the LTA is to have cultural awareness. He/she is the main link between the two organisations, and will be a representative of both institutions. One of the key lessons that SN have learnt from engaging in institutional cooperation with institutions in developing countries is that the cultural differences often have been underestimated, and that in order to succeed in developing projects the long term adviser needs to have a high cultural awareness in addition to the actual subject matter skills of statistics.

The employment situation for an LTA in a foreign country has special features. The person relates on a daily basis to the NSO where he/she works, but in case of conflict or other problems, there must be a backup from SN. SN has good experience in involving the Environment, Health and Safety (EHS) contact person in SN as a point of contact for the LTA.

8.6. The Short Term Adviser

Institutional cooperation projects where SN is involved are normally broad based covering areas like for instance development of a system for production of annual business statistics, CPI, National Accounts, business and population registers, social statistics, specific surveys or censuses, etc. In addition, our cooperation projects often involves giving assistance on crosscutting areas like for instance: dissemination, IT- systems and software, data handling and storage, analysis and report writing. The project coordinators, possibly together with the LTA must be able to identify and describe the technical assistance necessary, but experts on the various areas are necessary to provide the actual technical support. The cooperation projects include several short term missions of 2-3 weeks each on specific subject matter areas conducted by relevant subject matter experts in SN.

The short term adviser (STA) should always be presented a ToR for the task she is requested to do. If there have been earlier missions on the same subject matter, she shall also be provided with relevant documentation. The expert is responsible for the tasks given in the ToR. She must therefore read the ToR carefully to analyse if the job is possible within the given time frame.

It happens that not all the tasks in a ToR are completed at the end of a mission. The reasons are many, from the people writing the ToR underestimating the work and overestimating abilities of the people involved, via unforeseen problems with the tasks at hand to practical problems delaying processes, like lack of infrastructure or illness. The STA is responsible for communicating problems and delays as soon as they occur either to the LTA, the project coordinator or the home coordinator. It is important that the expert finishes the mission by writing a mission report. The report itself should be short containing the main goals achieved, trouble met and way forward.

A possible alternative to using short time expert from SN is to use regional high level consultants to do short term technical missions for the developing cooperation partner when this is a possibility. This is a good way of combining SNs institutional competence with a better cultural competence and knowledge of how the system works in the developing country. A regional consultant also normally costs less to hire and therefore is more sustainable. An important indirect effect is that South-to-South (or East-to-East) cooperation and relations could improve.

The few experiences SN has in using regional experts are all positive. When using regional consultants for short term technical missions in our cooperation projects, it is SN's responsibility that the consultant is fully competent to provide the assistance required for the mission.

8.7. Accountant in Statistics Norway

The home coordinators in SN and the project coordinators in the partner organisation have the main responsibility for the budget process, but the accounts are managed by an administrative employee in SN. We have found it useful that this person is working in the Division for Development Cooperation.

The accountant's role differs according to funding modality. If SN administers the funds received, he/she has the main responsibility for the accounts and it is also his/her task to transfer funds to the partner organisation for purchase of equipment etc. If the partner organisation is the direct recipient, he/she keeps track of the balance due to SN for expenses related to short and long term missions etc.

Project accounting differs from the regular accounting at SN and other public offices in Norway. The accountant does not necessarily have to work within the division of development cooperation, but because some issues are different from regular accounting in SN, it is important to have at least one accounting person who obtains special knowledge in this field. It is relevant for this person to receive trainings in specific issues relating to project accounting in developing countries and countries in transition.

In addition, the accountant is responsible for a list of financial issues. This includes refunds to SN employees related to short and long term missions (hotel, air tickets, per diem, housing etc) and purchases related to study visits (clothing, social activities etc).

8.8. Advisory group for LTA

The LTA often works on his/her own and might need support from experts back home in Norway. One productive way of solving this is to create a group of experts that the LTA can have regularly contact with to discuss different matters. The group of people chosen should be interested in international work and get sufficient time to spend on the project in order to get ownership to the project. Short term experts on the same project are natural choices, but other SN staff with relevant knowledge may also play an important role.

A specific amount of working hours can be agreed upon in advance. It is then also easier for the participants in the advisory group to prioritise this function if needed.

The support can be arranged in different ways, but a solution we have had success with are regular telephone meetings. Support by e-mail or chats are also possible solutions.

8.9. Donors

Donors affect our institutional cooperation projects in four main ways:

1. Donors provide funding for our projects. In return they receive progress, financial and other reports
2. Donors, in most cases Norwegian embassies, have competence that are complementary to ours, and hence serve as useful advisors to our projects
3. Donors are one of the main users of statistical output from our projects. In that respect they often have their own preferences about the nature and content of these outputs
4. Donors are political players in our partner countries, and their influence increases with the share of the partner country's public budget that they provide.

Donors as project funders

More than 90% of the SN projects in partner countries are funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign affairs. MFA is for several reasons also usually also the only funder of these projects. The lack of other funders is to a large extent due to the high Norwegian cost level, but also because Norway as a non-EU member is a less attractive consortium partner in larger tenders. SN does also seldom compete for tenders. We view our activity as an extension of Norwegian development policy – not as an enterprise in itself. By contracting SN to work with a partner, the MFA does not only support the provision of statistical services and capacity to the partner institution in a narrow sense, but also a set of normative values underlying Norwegian development aid. These values range from basing the work on the UN Fundamental Principles for Statistics, to promoting Norwegian good governance practices such as transparency, non-corruption, equal treatment of individuals with respect to sex, ethnicity, religion and family background. SN does, however, sometimes participate in tenders when we find it strategically relevant. Such considerations could relate to tender partners, the topic of the assignment or the cooperating institution. Further, on some projects institutions like DFID and SIDA have acted as co-funders, and the joint Scandinavian project “Scanstat” has received funding from SIDA and DANIDA, in addition to Norwegian funding.

Institutional cooperation projects are sometimes initiated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who may want visible Norwegian presence in a country or a region. However, experiences have shown that local ownership is much higher when the initiative for cooperation comes from the partner institution which have identified specific knowledge gaps. Such requests may be forwarded through an MFA institution or to SN directly. A successful hybrid solution is that MFA announces its willingness to fund projects in 1-2 countries in a region (Norwegian visibility), and then leaves for SN to identify the most promising projects, based on partner country institutions' needs and capacity¹⁵. This model is successful because it allows MFA achieve their goal of supporting statistics in a prioritized geographical area, stimulates prospective partner countries to develop good project applications in order to compete for MFA funding, and finally, allows SN to spend more time on assuring the quality of the planning and preparatory work due to lower economic risk. Prior to any final application to the Norwegian MFA institution(s) SN and the partner institutions undertakes a process where the partner's needs for assistance are matched with what SN can provide. SN may also provide advice on priorities and may recommend certain technical approaches. The overall process must always be guided by the NSDS, if such a strategy exists.

Donors as project advisers

Donors can provide important advice to the design and implementation of institutional cooperation projects. However, the relevance of such advice eventually depends on individuals within the donor organisation; their priorities,

¹⁵ This model was used for the 5 Central Asian countries.

time available and experience. The effect of the institutional cooperation is enhanced where there is both a Norwegian embassy and a long term adviser from SN. The best results are achieved when the embassy can not only provide information about the bigger political context, but also complement the information needs expressed by the ministries directly to the NSO.

Most countries have developed a strategic plan for the development of the national statistical system, usually called “The National Strategy for Development of Statistics” (NSDS). The NSDS is supposed to be aligned both with the overall national development plan (“PRSP”), and the corresponding Sector Development Plans (SDP). An NSDS outlines what statistics that shall be produced, when, by whom and who is financing it, and brings the different development partners together to coordinate support, enhance efficiency and avoid overlapping or conflicting projects. Development partners support a broad scope of national institutions and development programmes which all need statistics for planning and monitoring purposes. Since SN is usually not directly involved in M&E activities, it is important that the Embassy may provide us with information from this important arena for user-produce dialogue.

Embassies also provide valuable advice on project management. Good cooperation with the embassies involves all three parties in the cooperation being invited to relevant meetings, being informed of important policy developments, and having regular contact to exchange information.

SN is not a professional development organisation – it is a professional statistical agency working with development cooperation. Much of the increased professionalism in development has come through learning from Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The ministry has a system of courses in project management and development cooperation which are highly relevant for SN staff who works within the institutional cooperation programmes. The overall scale of international cooperation projects in SN is too small to have these types of training provided in-house. SN has had very positive experiences from attending these trainings.

The Embassy is however seldom, although there are exceptions, experts on the role of statistics in society. Within the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, this kind of expertise is primarily found in Norad. Hence, a good dialogue with Norad on strategic sides of the cooperation is very fruitful. Norad does also use SN directly with projects aiming to build supporting competence, development of statistical tools and analysis involving more than one country.

Donors as users of project output

In contrast to many other sectors of development cooperation, donors are themselves also users of statistical output, and hence have their own preferences about its content. Embassies have to report on country level results of their various sector funding schemes to their home offices, and statistics is an important basis for such reporting. It is commonly observed that donor’s own data needs influence the type of statistics being supported. An example is giving priority to social statistics over economic statistics, and, more generally, to data collection rather than building statistical infrastructure. We have in particular observed this with UN organisations and the World Bank, who have strong user interest in the data produced. This is in the nature of the UN work and not necessarily negative. If there is a lack of trust in the NSI’s ability to provide quick and reliable data, this may lead to the use of data modelled by international organizations, or the organization of separate statistical surveys outside the NSI. This has a range of negative effects: Confidence in the NSI may be further undermined, funding for statistics is eroded, in particular support to statistical infrastructure and data analysis, and statistical priorities outlined by the NSDS are ignored. In spite of this, it may be difficult for a funding-starved local statistical agency to reject offers of donor funded surveys, even when these surveys are not on the local list of

prioritized activities. In worse cases, some donors use funding of particular surveys to brand their own organization. It should be mentioned that our experiences with Norwegian donors are positive, and that joint priorities presented by SN and our partner institutions are seldom overruled by the Norwegian Embassies.

Donors as political players in partner countries

Donors are important political players in partner countries. Evidently, they influence national policies through their priority setting in funding of sectors and programs. Donors may also take a more active and visible role in national policy implementation by acting as “lead donors”. A lead donor for statistics will strive to coordinate the donor community’s support to statistics, advocate the use of this statistics, and serve as a hub for contact with local government institutions, as well as institutions providing technical assistance, such as SN.

Donors may even involve themselves directly in the management of funds for statistical capacity building. One example is to agree on common standards and practices for partner budgeting. An important aim for donor support to statistical cooperation is to develop common standards for per diem paid through the projects. Due to much travelling and field work expense connected to data collection takes a heavy toll on project budgets. Experiences from countries with no standards (or where standards are not used) are that different standards among different donors create conflict of interest within the institution. We have experiences of fieldwork not going as planned because another survey was paid better, or, more often, that staff do not attend meetings or trainings because they get allowance for being somewhere else. In contrast to SN, the lead donor can convince other donors to harmonize their reporting routines to lessen the reporting burden on the NSO. Cooperation in this field can also increase transparency and reduce the risk for corruption.

9. Tools to build statistical competence

The following chapter is a list of tools used by SN in international development cooperation. Most of the tools mentioned here have been discussed in different contexts throughout the previous chapters. The purpose of this chapter is to make an overview to pick from when choosing what tool to use for which purpose in a cooperation project.

9.1. Short term assignments in the cooperation institution

Short term assignments are described under Short Term Adviser (STA) in chapter 6. Core advantages are that the STA can provide:

- expert input on specific issues which the long term adviser can not provide
- short trainings/courses on demand, when there is little need for continuous follow up afterwards, or where the LTA can do the follow up

The ToR for short term missions is an important tool to help plan, conduct and follow up short term technical assistance. It is our experience that when the ToR is prepared by the receiving institution in close cooperation with the LTA it helps to assure the success of the mission. The ToR should give a description of the work to be done by the adviser and the receiving institution, the outcomes and follow up after a mission is completed.

9.2. Long term assignments in the cooperation institution

Long term assignments are described under Long Term Adviser (LTA) in chapter 6. Core advantages are that the LTA can provide:

- Someone that can follow up on the work continually within the partner organisation
- Expertise in a core field of cooperation over time

- A link between SN and partner organisation to improve information and cooperation

The LTA will always have a ToR describing his/her tasks and responsibilities. This ToR will normally be more general compared to ToRs for short term missions as it has a longer time frame and may cover the main responsibility for a large project. The LTA will also need to incorporate the contributions of STAs in his/her overall work. The form and content of this ToR will therefore encompass more than a ToR for a short term mission, but a critical factor for it to be useful is again that it is developed by the receiving institution in close cooperation with SN.

9.3. Study visits to Statistics Norway

One or more people from the partner organisation visit SN for some days or up to two weeks. The visits can be for courses held at SN or exposure to the different divisions of SN. The activity is cost saving when many SN employees are involved, compared to sending them on individual trips to visit the partner organisation. Advantages of study visits are:

- partner organisation learns how the work is carried out at SN and see more of the organisation
- trainings can involve a large number of relevant experts from SN
- the visiting group keeps focus on the activity at hand, being away from the regular interruptions at home
- can also be seen as a bonus to employees that have made an effort
- teambuilding for the visiting group; colleagues and people from different organisations get to know each other better

9.4. Meetings

Personal meetings – both formal and informal - are a key tool in SN's institutional cooperation projects.

The annual meeting

There are two annual meetings within the cooperation: One between SN and the partner organisation and one, afterwards, between the recipient of the funding and the donor. The format of the annual meeting with the donor depends on the funding modality. If the grant goes to the NSO, then the NSO has the meeting with the donor. If the grant goes through SN, then SN has the meeting with the donor. In our institutional cooperation projects, we most often have that the partner in the cooperation who is not the receiver of the grant participates in the annual meeting with the donor as an observer.

The main purpose of the annual meetings is to facilitate project management and follow up. These meetings are essential to secure accountability, assure that there is ownership to the program at a high level in both institutions and ensure that information is shared with all parties involved. The annual meeting is a formal arena for reporting back to the donor (i.e. the Norwegian Embassy in the country or MFA) in a structured way. The main participants in these meetings are the cooperating institutions and the Embassy/MFA.

Documents to be prepared by the partner organisation and SN for the annual meetings are;

- Annual progress report
- Project accounts
- Revised work plan for the coming year
- Budget for the next project year with proposals for reallocations.
- (Application for the next funding period)

Agreed minutes must be produced from the meeting and signed by both parties.

Other meetings

Personal meetings are an important tool with which to build trust and a common understanding of tasks and goals for the cooperation, and for sharing information and challenges. We strive at organising our cooperation projects around regular personal meetings between the parties involved. Examples of personal meetings included in our cooperation projects can be:

- Weekly meetings between the LTA and his counterpart(s) to discuss i.e. progress, responsibilities and work to be done
- High level meetings between the cooperating institutions
- Coordination meetings between the home coordinator and the project manager and top management in the partner organisation
- Seminars/workshops within the receiving institution i.e. to gather key staff for subject matter discussion, or externally i.e. to provide information or get feedback from users or other producers.
- Study visits to SN or other relevant parties
- Back-up support meetings

9.5. On-the-job-training

The most central tool for capacity building in an NSO is on-the-job-training: To work together to carry out the tasks and solve problems together as they arise. At the core is the knowledge that people learn best when they know why they need the knowledge. Advantages of on-the-job -training are:

- training is seen as relevant to do the daily work at the NSO
- people remember best if they repeat the tasks soon after learning them
- personal follow up of individuals over time

The training requires that the mentor is available over time, allowing time to let the learner implement skills between guiding sessions.

9.6. Short term courses

Short term courses are used to cover a large amount of information on a theme in a short period. This is often the most relevant format because the adviser from SN is on a relatively short visit to the partner organisation or a group from the partner organisation is in Norway for a limited time period. It is also efficient when a larger group of people shall learn a specific skill. Advantages of short term courses are:

- assigns time to focus on one specific topic
- several people can learn the same skill at the same time
- covers issues that are often lost in on-the-job training, like context, background or basic skills
- people from different NSO's can take part in the same training
- participants can be taken out of their daily setting, to enable them to focus on one thing

9.7. In-house statistical schools

It is recommended that all systematic in-house training is coordinated through a designated structure that we in SN label a "Statistical School". The reason is to align the joint training course profile with the cooperating institution's overall competence strategy. A statistical school will be able to centralise practical preparations, such as presenting course schedules, organising participation lists and certificates, and providing training rooms, printed material and working computers. This leaves only the course content as the focus of the instructors. Advantages of having a statistical school are:

- employees train one another
- over time it is cheaper than depending solely on external trainers

- more efficient use of external trainers (better communication between departments)
- it can assure consistency in training provided and a system to meet training needs

A statistical school in one form or another is a necessity to transfer skills in a sustainable NSO and should therefore be part of the overall HR plan for the NSO.

9.8. Training of trainers

There is a difference between knowing a skill and teaching the skill to your colleagues. Sustainability depends on the NSO being able to train its own recruits in new skills. It is therefore important that trainers from a partner like SN share their knowledge, training material and methods with the staff at the partner organisation. Advantages of training of trainers are:

- employees train one another
- cheaper than depending on external trainers
- necessary for sustainability once external cooperation is over

Teaching should be seen as prestigious in the organisation, but this is not always the fact. Incentives can be given to encourage staff to share their knowledge.

9.9. Library

Even in a digital world, there is a need for books and publications. SN has supported the establishment of libraries at NSOs. Online access to publications from all over the world is a part of this. It is a challenge to keep the library open and updated. Advantages of having a library are:

- to keep a collection of the most central handbooks and tools
- have a place to store paper publications which in other ways may be easily lost
- a place for visitors to access statistical publications
- a place to access digital libraries
- a place to receive guidance in accessing printed and digital sources

9.10. Statistical champions

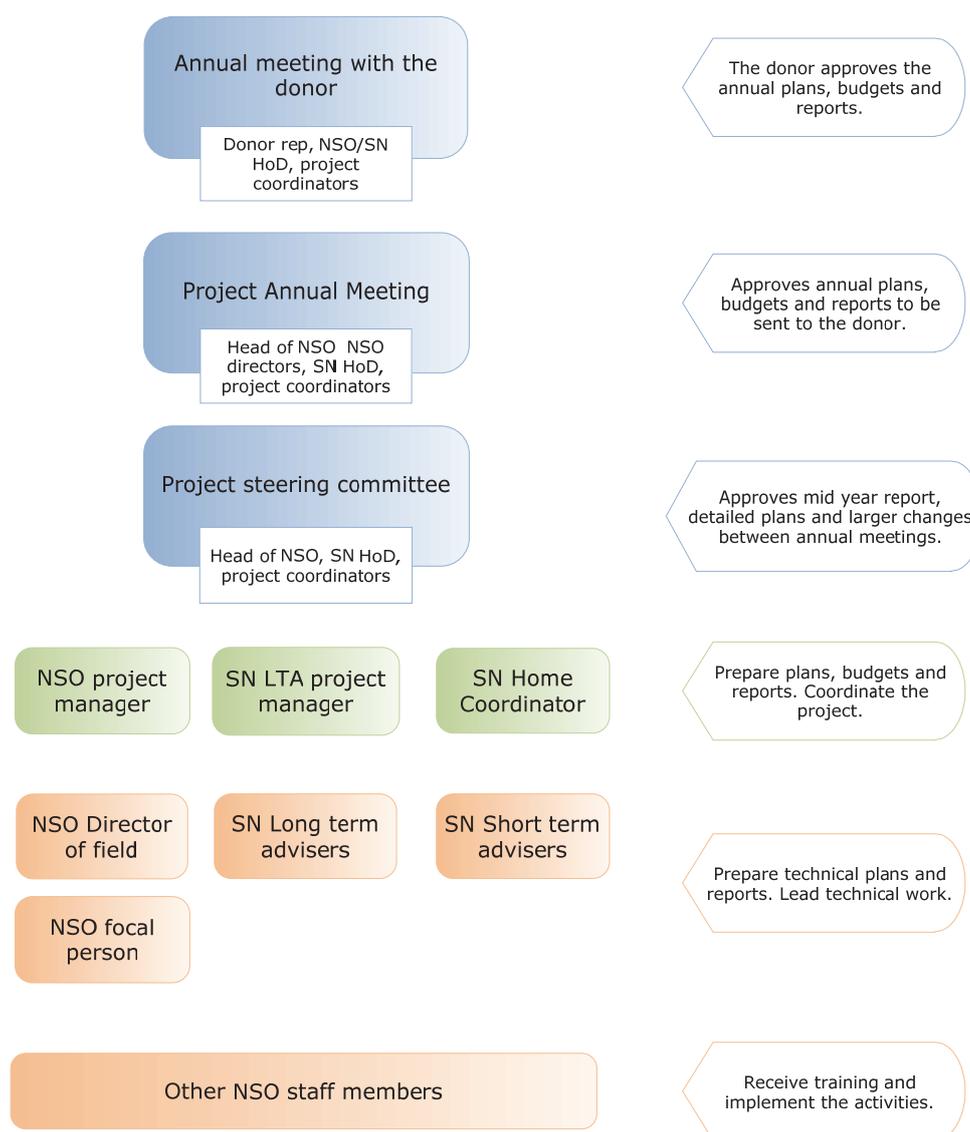
Statistical champions are people in central positions who ensure that statistics are used for evidence based planning and policy development. These are crucial allies to disseminate official statistics. They will usually be ministers, other politicians and higher public employees, but also other development partners or journalists. Statistical champions support persons that disseminate statistics in a good way. They are also helpful to make sure the goals of the cooperation coincide with the statistical needs of the users.

9.11. National and regional workshops

Another tool we find useful in developing capacity for statistics is arranging national and regional workshops on relevant subject matters together with our partners. Funding for such workshops is often included in the budgets for institutional cooperation projects. Occasionally the project cooperation also supports participation in workshops held by third party organisations. Our experience is that such workshops:

- are an excellent tool for making the national or regional statistics visible and how statistics can be used in knowledge based planning.
- bring together experts/colleagues from partner countries which work on the same field of expertise in order for them to exchange ideas and building networks

Example of organisation of an institutional cooperation project

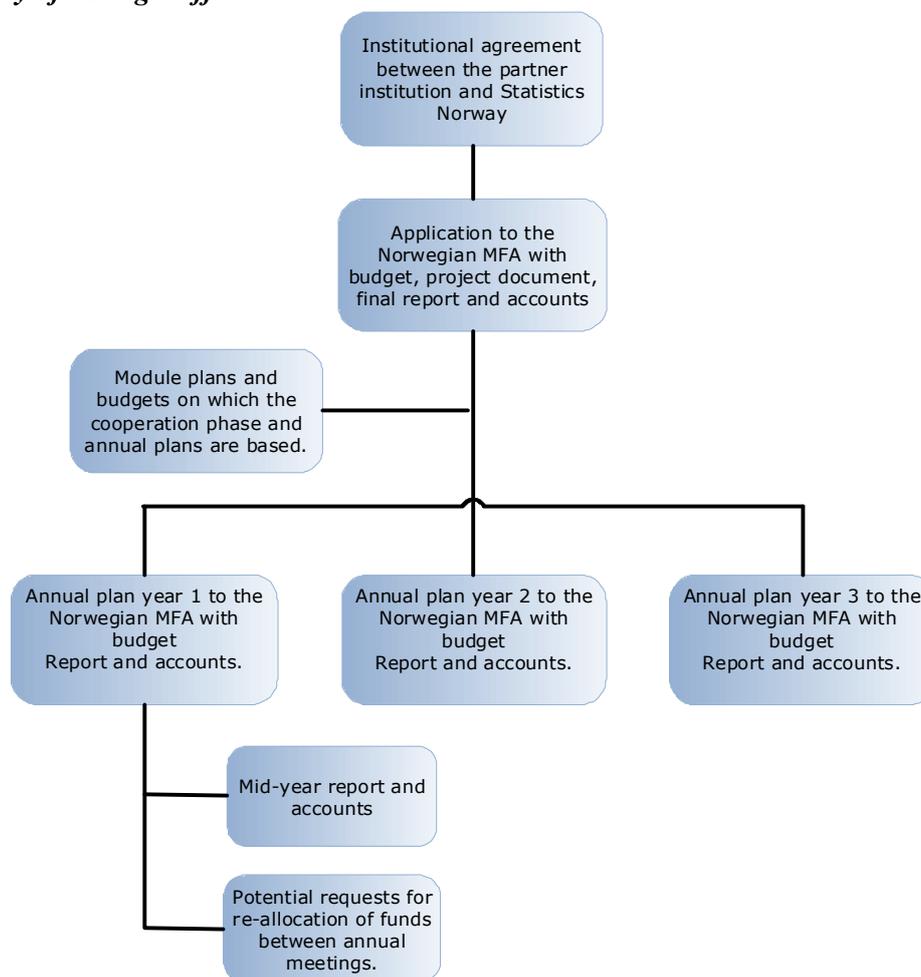


NSO National Statistical Office – the partner organisation
 SN Statistics Norway
 HoD Head of Division – referring to head of division for development cooperation in SN
 NSO focal person Refers to a person who is given responsibility for a field of statistics, for instance project manager of a survey. The person will often work directly with the SN advisers, but reports to the director in his/her own organisation.

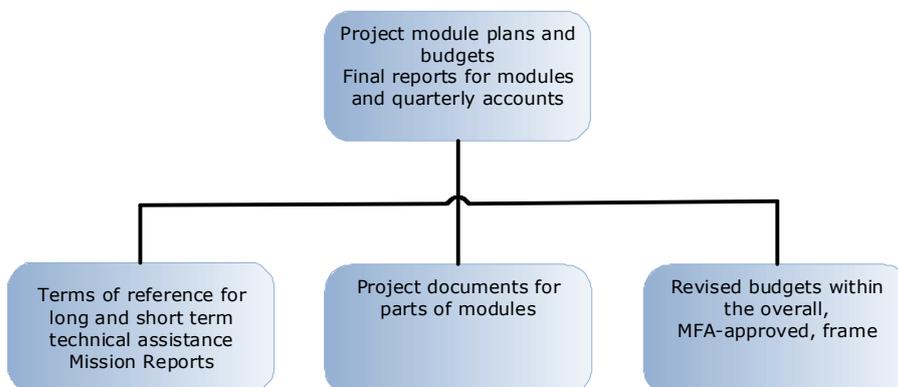
Note: The format of the annual meeting with the donor depends on the funding modality.

Examples of formal documents in an Institutional Cooperation Project

Documents the partner institution and Statistics Norway agree upon and forward to the Norwegian Embassy/Ministry of Foreign Affairs



Formal documents between the partner institution and SN, which are available for the Norwegian Embassy and other stakeholders upon request.



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