



**Economic and Social  
Council**

Distr.  
General

ECE/CES/2006/17  
27 March 2006

Original: ENGLISH

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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

**STATISTICAL COMMISSION**

**CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS**

Fifty-fourth plenary session  
Paris, 13-15 June 2006  
Item 8 of the provisional agenda

**SEMINAR ON HUMAN RESOURCES AND TRAINING  
SESSION I**

**INE-Spain's experience in vocational training of employees<sup>1</sup>**

**Submitted by the National Statistical Institute of Spain**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

1. In a statistical office, the staff's vocational training is one of the main pillars of the quality of its products. In a fast-changing world and constantly evolving society, governments and other statistics users have an increasing need for information of an ever more demanding quality. Any of the developed countries need only look back to see the major advances achieved in the past fifteen years in both statistical quantity and quality.

2. In Europe, the output of national statistics has been greatly affected by the demands of European Union membership – and, more particularly, membership of the European Monetary Union – which requires that the European Statistical System produce macroeconomic data to standards of availability and timeliness comparable to those attained in the United States. Ongoing improvement of statistical systems requires, among other things, constant reinforcement of the reliability and credibility of official data; statistical services therefore need to be

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<sup>1</sup> This paper has been prepared at the invitation of the secretariat.

technically and professionally independent, as set forth in the Quality Declaration of the European Statistical System and the Code of Practice.

3. On 24 February 2005, the Code of Practice was unanimously endorsed by the Statistical Programme Committee with the dual purpose of, on the one hand, improving trust and confidence in statistical authorities by proposing certain institutional and organizational arrangements and, on the other hand, reinforcing the quality of the statistics they produce and disseminate, by promoting the coherent application of best international statistical principles, methods and practices by all producers of official statistics in Europe.

4. Both the Code of Practice and the Quality Declaration of the European Statistical System expressly recognise staff – and staff training – as the main asset of a statistical office. Principles 3, 4 and 7 of the Code of Practice relate to staff training and skills, which in turn underlie the scientific and methodological soundness of the statistical office's information products. Ongoing improvement of quality is only feasible if coupled with appropriate programmes for the continuing training of personnel. Training should thus be viewed as a normal and standard activity of the organization.

## II. OVERVIEW OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING AT INE

5. The National Statistical Institute of Spain's (INE) concern for staff quality and professional development is reflected in the latest National Statistical Plan 2005-2008 enacted by the Government under Royal Decree 1991/2004 of 17 September 2004. The Plan's overall aims include institutional actions for (i) quality assessment of statistics and the statistical units producing them, (ii) research and new techniques and technologies for data collection, processing, analysis and results dissemination, and (iii) training programmes and skills update for human resources.

6. Vocational training at INE has for years taken the form of annual skills update programmes run by two specific units: the Human Resources unit, which organises vocational training and development courses of a general nature (IT, languages, temporary staff training, special courses for career development, etc.), and the Public Administration Statistics School (Escuela de Estadística de las Administraciones Públicas). The School runs more specific courses on statistical methodology and techniques.

## III. HUMAN RESOURCES UNIT

7. The general training provided by the Human Resources Unit includes annual programmes of courses and seminars – several of which have become firmly established and are run year after year, while others are created in a given year to meet new needs detected in: (i) job position and job occupant assessment; (ii) changes of methods and processes, staff replacement or rotation, work schedule changes, etc.; and (iii) specific problem areas (low productivity, excessive errors, poor inter-personal relationships, lack of interest in a job, and so forth). When a training need is detected, it is then assessed and prioritised for coverage in the following year.

8. Some courses are fixed and are run every year, such as language courses – English and French particularly – which are aimed mostly at technical staff who attend international meetings, courses and conferences to share experiences and learn the best international practices. The programme of established yearly courses also includes several specialised IT subjects – programming and communications – adapted each year to specific needs, such as database systems, mainframe operating systems, electronic data interchange protocols, advanced SAS courses and others.

9. Particular emphasis is laid on management courses for senior executives and middle managers. These courses are run yearly to foment and extend best practices in management and human relations: leadership, negotiation techniques, meeting and working-group management, effective communications and presentations, etc.

10. We also have specific seminars aimed at particular professional groups, such as interviewers and other specialist data collection staff. Training programmes available to all staff include multimedia office IT courses and other self-learning modules, which are also available to temporary staff as required. As an indicator of the training intensity of the courses organised by Human Resources, the number of people taking a course last year (about 3,100) was close to three quarters of our total staff (including temporary employees).

#### IV. PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION STATISTICS SCHOOL

11. The Public Administration Statistics School, which forms part of INE, plays an important role as provider of courses and seminars on statistical methodology and techniques. The School's purpose is the statistical training of employees across all government levels (central, regional and local) and of other social groups that may need statistical training. The courses relate to the surveys and statistics produced by agents of the national statistical system, statistical methods and techniques, the legal framework of public statistics and related subjects. The teaching staff is made up of statisticians working at INE and other statistics institutions, and a body of statistics professors, lecturers and experts. The Statistics School also runs orientation courses for newly recruited technical staff.

12. Every year, we hold around 20 courses and seminars on a range of topics, such as time series analysis, INE survey sample design, national and regional accounts, and monographs on changes and updates in specific statistical operations. In 2006, for instance, we have scheduled a course on the main new features in the social statistics system; we shall look at the living conditions survey, the homeless persons survey and the survey on the transition from education to the job market. A semi-novel course scheduled for 2006 will address the European Statistical System from the point of view of the present organisational structure and functioning of official statistics in the European Union. This course will be provided in partnership with Eurostat and the Central Bank of Spain.

13. INE's participation in Eurostat task forces and working groups can also give rise to training courses on new skills and experiences. For example, INE took part in the project EURAREA (Enhancing Small Area Estimation in Europe), which was the springboard for a special course on

small area estimation – of particular interest to statisticians in Spain's Autonomous Communities (self-ruling regions).

14. Finally, and although this topic has more to do with Session II of the Seminar on human resources and training, mention should be made of the training imparted to potential public statistics employees through INE's Master's degree in Applied Statistics and Statistics for the Public Sector. This is run jointly by the University of Alcalá and INE to provide advanced specialised training in the applied statistics field, with a special emphasis on public sector information. This Master's qualification is aimed at university graduates wishing to become statistics specialists at an equivalent level to that required in the statistical units of public bodies, as well as in market research companies, financial institutions and large corporations.

## V. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper was prepared by Carmen Alcaide Guindo.

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