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Agenda item 8

**SEMINAR ON HUMAN RESOURCES AND TRAINING**

**SESSION I**

**Human resources planning in the planning of statistical office operations:  
Ukraine's experience\***

**Submitted by the Ukrainian State Committee on Statistics**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

1. The accomplishment of the tasks facing statistical bodies depends on a number of factors. One of these is the availability of highly skilled staff; accordingly, staffing policy takes high priority among statistical service activities. This paper presents information on the general human resources planning and development system, the related problems that the Ukrainian statistical service is encountering at present, and the approaches being taken to those problems.
2. Pursuant to Ukraine's National Statistics Act, the State Committee on Statistics is a central executive body with special authority and responsibility for the conduct of State policy on statistics. It functions in accordance with rolling long-term development plans for statistics and yearly schedules of official statistical observations.

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\* This paper was introduced at the invitation of the secretariat.

## **II. STRATEGIC PLANNING OF THE WORK OF STATISTICAL BODIES**

3. At the heart of statistical operations lie multi-year programmes defining the strategic thrust of development in national statistics with due regard for both internal and external factors. The multi-year programmes (it is the practice in Ukraine to plan strategically over five-year periods) are multidisciplinary in nature, having a bearing on improvements in all aspects of statistical activity. Besides the statistical bodies, other ministries and Government departments, research institutions and institutions of higher learning are involved in their formulation and execution. As a rule, the formulation and execution of long-term statistical programmes is accompanied by a review of the organizational structure of the State Committee on Statistics and its local branches, the aim being to bring them into line with strategic goals and tasks. A study of the human resources available in individual departments, regional offices and the system as a whole is therefore conducted while programmes are being formulated, plans for developing staff potential are drawn up and the resources required for programme execution are detailed. The long-term programmes are put into effect by means of yearly work plans which, after detailed negotiation in the statistical system itself and with developers and users of statistics in other ministries and Government departments, are confirmed by special resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers.

4. Every long-term programme invariably includes a special element on the development of staff potential - improving staff members' skills and abilities to carry out the assignments specified in the programme. Ukraine is currently in the course of its third such long-term programme. A large range of steps were taken under the two previous programmes to train staff in modern statistical methods; as a result, the State Committee has a largish pool of skilled experts to call on. The current programme calls for further efforts to develop a modern staff management and training system drawing on past achievements and the modern practices followed in other statistical services. Plans include the development of an all-encompassing strategy for human resource development, covering:

- (a) The introduction of an ongoing training system for the staff of statistical bodies, users and correspondents;
- (b) The formulation and adoption of more effective staff management procedures;
- (c) The adoption of incentive mechanisms for skills improvement, higher productivity etc.

## **III. CURRENT PLANNING OF STATISTICAL OPERATIONS**

5. The current planning system includes a yearly schedule of statistical observations which covers the entire day-to-day activity of the statistical service and the responsibilities of other ministries and Government departments for collecting and processing certain kinds of information then forwarding the processed results to the statistical authorities. A technological schedule of observations is also produced, for internal purposes; for each specific operation this regulates frequency, stages and deadlines, and identifies the parties specifically responsible for execution. A schedule for the development and use of electronic statistical processing equipment is produced every year to permit work on automated data collection and processing,

both regionally and centrally, in accordance with the schedule of statistical observations. The yearly schedule of observations is supplemented by half-yearly schedules of economic and organizational activities. The schedule of economic activities governs the list of reports, bulletins, compilations and other statistical publications together with the deadlines for their issuance. The organizational schedules cover basic activities relating to the conduct of meetings and seminars, verification of the work done by regional statistical bodies, data quality checks and so forth. Besides the schedules listed above, there is a separate, yearly calendar of statistical research supported by the State budget and carried out by the Ukrainian State Committee on Statistics' Scientific Complex for Statistical Research.

6. Current planning is coupled with thorough investigation and analysis of how effectively human, physical and financial resources are put to use; the basic findings serve as the basis for the following series of yearly schedules. This investigation and analysis entails:

(a) Monthly scrutiny of the figures from the automated system that keeps track of the time worked at each subsidiary unit of the State Committee and each regional statistical body;

(b) Quarterly summaries of the work performed by regional statistical bodies;

(c) Discussion, at meetings of senior management and balance commissions, etc., of progress reports from the subsidiary units of the State Committee and its regional bodies;

(d) Regular discussion, in ad hoc internal commissions of the State Committee, of proposals from employees of statistical bodies for reducing the working time and resources spent on producing statistics;

(e) A yearly assessment of how well employees have performed their tasks and obligations;

(f) Establishment of a pool of staff in reserve and planning ahead to meet the need for qualified staff.

7. The formulation of the yearly schedule of statistical activities follows upon work by the State Committee's Commission for improved State Statistics and Accounting Documentation which, in the light of proposals from the regional statistical bodies and principal users, decides whether current accounting practices need to be amended for the coming year. The Commission's findings are used to produce a list of statistical activities for inclusion in the yearly schedule together with the additional human and other resources required for their execution. On the strength of this information, the Ministry of Finance is sent a funding request broken down by budget programmes, giving justifications for the amount of budget financing required over the coming year; one of the main items of expenditure is labour costs. Budget allocations do not always correspond to statistical bodies' requirements, however, and it is then necessary to continue performing established tasks within the human and financial resources available.

8. In carrying out the yearly schedule of statistical observations, the State Committee is entitled to make use of an internal mechanism to reassign human and financial resources within the limits of the envelope allocated, in order to ensure that priority tasks are accomplished.

9. Other devices, such as hiring individual experts on contract and collaborating with scientific organizations (governmental and commercial) over essential scientific developments, are also used to ensure compliance with strategic and current work schedules for statistical bodies.

10. One of the key tools now in use in the statistical bodies' scheduling system is an automated system for keeping track of time worked. This can provide detailed information on the workload facing statistical staff, establish the cost of statistical output and provide justification for budget requests to finance statistical observations. Ukraine switched, in 2002, to a programme-objective-based method of drawing up the State budget: to see how effectively budget resources are used and to determine scheduled spending in support of statistical bodies, therefore, the State Committee, drawing on the experience of, and with advisory support from, the statistical services in Sweden and Latvia, developed this automated system which it began in 2004 to bring into use in statistical bodies at all levels.

11. In two years of operation this system has yielded information permitting a detailed analysis of how effectively staff potential is put to use in the statistical system overall and in the regional branches, and enabling labour resources to be reassigned as necessary among the subsidiary units of the State Committee and the regions within the approved maximum staffing strength so as to level out imbalances in workload and thus improve general efficiency. Such monitoring and optimized assignment of labour resources now takes place continually, and account is taken of the results in drawing up yearly schedules of statistical observations, setting priorities, improving organizational structure, managing production processes and managing labour within the statistical system.

#### **IV. HUMAN RESOURCES ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING**

12. As already mentioned, the available human resources are analysed as schedules of statistical activity are drawn up and separate schedules for the use of staff potential are prepared. Planning for the use of staff in the State Committee and the national statistical system overall is, as one component of general human resource planning, governed by the State Service Act and a range of subordinate legislation.

13. At the beginning of every year, the State Committee personnel service checks how many staff at what level there are in each individual category (management and experts) and occupational area (staff working on industry-specific statistics and those in other service departments), so as to have detailed information about available staff potential in statistical bodies, and to know what posts are vacant and what staffing changes are to be expected.

14. To obtain information on the professional potential of the staff and requirements for further training, an evaluation is also made every year of how well staff in the statistical bodies are meeting their assignments and obligations. The findings are used in organizing and scheduling the work of specific staff members and of the statistical bodies as a whole. This evaluation of the previous year's results is conducted by the immediate chiefs of the subordinate units, taking as the starting point staff members' individual work plans established at the beginning of that year in accordance with the work plan for the particular unit concerned. Staff are assessed on their fulfilment of official instructions and individual work plans; on the basis of this and their self-assessments there is a discussion during which the staff members' work is

evaluated, tasks are assigned, new individual work plans are drawn up for the following year, regard being had for the unit's priorities, and needs for further training are identified. The outcome is used in determining the yearly and future need for professional staff, in formulating the official request for training, retraining and further training for statistical staff, and in career planning. Evaluation findings are taken into consideration by unit managers and the personnel service when they discuss the promotion of specific staff members, increases in grade, monetary supplements and bonuses, the establishment of a reserve pool of staff, extension of State employment etc.

## **V. PLANNING FOR THE DEPLOYMENT OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF**

15. One of the main staff deployment tools is the pool of staff held in reserve for State service. The purpose of setting up the pool is to be able to fill vacant positions efficiently with trained experts, and to forecast promotions. A pool is custom-constituted for specific occupations, both managerial (under current Ukrainian law governing State service, there must be two candidates for every position) and professional (when required). When candidates are selected for addition to the pool, unit managers take account of the yearly evaluations of staff members' work and such qualities as professional competence, organizational ability and initiative.

16. Workers in the State service staff pool prepare personal yearly work plans which are approved by unit managers. These plans call for systematic study of the basic legislation relating to the work of each statistical body, foreign and domestic academic investigations, and attendance at a variety of seminars, congresses and conferences. How well reservists have fulfilled their personal plans is considered when the yearly evaluation of State employees takes place.

17. The pool of reserve staff in the statistical system has accounted for between 40 and 50 per cent of all upward movements of staff in recent years. When a post for which there are potential candidates in the pool falls vacant, candidates are evaluated on their aptitude by reference to their personal training plans and the reservist who comes out best is given the opportunity to fill the post, thus enjoying in practice the prospect of career advance held out by the institution of the reserve pool.

18. New staff are selected to fill vacant posts by competitive examination, in accordance with the general rules governing work placement and the State Service Act. The examination tests what applicants know about statistics in general and in the specific area where they hope to work, and about conditions of employment in State service. The State Committee has a special standing examination commission for this purpose, consisting of unit managers and headed by the Vice-President.

## **VI. PLANNING TO MEET THE NEED FOR SKILLED STAFF**

19. The demands made of statistics nowadays are markedly increasing the need for highly skilled staff. One of the main features of human resources planning at the State Committee is, accordingly, training and retraining for professional staff. The subject is a problematic one in staff relations, since there is a serious shortage of budgetary funds available for the purpose. At present about 60 per cent of staff in the statistical system need further training. Technical

cooperation programmes enabling staff at statistical bodies in Ukraine to acquire essential knowledge about modern statistical methods have an important role to play here.

20. Staff retraining - giving staff a second specialist education - is undertaken by the State Academy of Statistics, Accounting and Auditing on official request from the State Committee. The Academy offers instruction in "Statistics". The amount of retraining taking place does not yet correspond to existing demand.

21. The staff planning process in the statistical system also includes forward planning to meet training needs for masters in public administration. The training concerned is offered by the National Academy of Public Administration, a part of the Presidential apparatus, which puts together the official training request on the basis of the needs of State and local authorities. Those trained as masters in public administration have a pre-eminent right to occupy vacant managerial posts in statistical bodies since, besides their specialist higher education (in statistics, in this case) they are also professional managers. In planning to meet the need for masters in public administration, management and the personnel service take account not only of the value of a given State employee to the statistical bodies but also of genuine prospects for that employee to advance in service.

22. Staff planning has much in common with other kinds of planning, but also its own special features deriving from the difficulty of forecasting how staff will perform on the job. Most of the staff in Ukraine's statistical bodies are women (93 per cent of the total, and 63 per cent of them are of child-bearing age), and this, too, has some effect on forecasts of how staff will be deployed. Although the staffing situation in the statistical bodies is at present fairly stable (about 55 per cent of staff have worked in statistics for over 10 years, and one in five has done so for over 20 years), the stress of the work and dissatisfaction with pay levels (which are below those in effect in a number of other State institutions, the banking and the commercial sector) are leading some staff, young professionals in particular, to seek to apply their knowledge elsewhere.

23. Problems in staff planning also arise when dealing with groups such as the young and staff of pensionable age. In view of the fact that employment in State service does not yet carry the necessary level of prestige and that wages are fairly low, it is hard to prevent possible departures in search of higher pay. It is, however, the policy of the State Committee to attract as many young staff as possible through collaboration with institutions of higher learning training professional statisticians and economists; and under the State Service Act, it is sometimes the practice to extend the service of the most valuable staff members so that they can complete important tasks and train fully fledged replacements.

## **VII. CONCLUSION**

24. The human resources planning system is an inseparable part of the planning system - strategic and day-to-day - for the operation of State statistical services overall. The focus in strategic planning has to be on forecasting possible structural and staffing changes in the light of the tasks confronting the statistical system, so as to be sure that the necessary staff are trained in good time. For countries with economies in transition this is a topical issue, since current

reforms and the related social and economic changes make it necessary to adapt fairly quickly to varying circumstances and to be conversant with the appropriate statistical methods. This places heavy demands on training and further training for staff in statistical bodies.

25. Staff training and further training are an expensive part of statistical service activities, especially in transition countries and countries which have only recently achieved market-economy status. Programmes of international cooperation have an exceptionally important role to play in this sense; we consider that the proportion of resources allocated for such purposes needs to be substantially increased, and that at the same time work in this area financed both by domestic resources and by various international programmes needs to be better coordinated.

26. Constant analysis of the efficiency with which human resources are used plays a key role in the day-to-day planning of statistical operations. Tools such as a system to account for time worked and monitor subsidiary unit output, which provide detailed information on workload, quality of work and so forth, are therefore very important to the operation of the statistical services. The establishment and development of such systems is a topical issue, which might therefore be discussed at forthcoming meetings of the Conference of European Statisticians.

27. It is important, if all the interdisciplinary issues relating to the planning and development of human resources in the statistical system are to be successfully resolved, to have a national strategy. It is most important for such a strategy to be supported at senior government level: this facilitates actual execution and financial backing. It is helpful for countries already planning or formulating such strategies to be able to draw on the experience of the statistical services in other countries with plenty of practice in applying modern methods to the execution of staffing policy. Thus there is value in considering the production for ECE countries of instruction manuals containing information about the positive experience that various statistical services have had with human resources planning (in the context of the relevant section of the *Handbook of Statistical Organization* produced by the United Nations Statistics Division). Such manuals could be very useful both to statistical services and to international organizations interested in sharing best experience in this area.

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