



Conference of European Statisticians

**Report of the workshop on Human Resources  
Management and Training in Statistical Offices  
14 – 16 September 2010, Geneva**

**I. Introduction**

The workshop on Human Resources Management and Training (HRMT) was held in Geneva on 14-16 September 2010.

The workshop was attended by representatives from Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Korea (Republic of), Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates and United Kingdom. Representatives of the United Nations Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (UNSIAP), European Commission (Eurostat), European Free Trade Association (EFTA) were also present. Hans-Joachim Rieger (TRANSFER) and Nicole Njaa (HEADWAY AS) participated as invited guest speakers.

**II. Agenda of the workshop**

1. How to attract and retain staff for tomorrow.
  - Human Resources in Statistical Offices
  - External vs. internal recruitment and future leaders in official statistics
  - The Statistical Office as an attractive employer
2. Training
  - Leadership development
  - How to identify and prioritise needs for training
  - Organisation of training activities and tools/methods for training
3. Concluding session
  - Reports of the parallel sessions
  - Future work

In addition a poster session with presentations of HRMT issues was organised at the end of the first day of the workshop.

### **III. Summary of the workshop and the main conclusions reached**

Recommendations for future work are given in section IV below. An overview of the papers and issues discussed and the conclusions that the participants reached are presented in the Annex. On the poster session presentations were made by Statistics Norway, Statistics Korea, the Turkish Statistical Institute and UNSIAP. Some of poster presentations together with the proceedings of the workshop are available on the UNECE website [www.unece.org/stats/documents/2010.09.hrm.htm](http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2010.09.hrm.htm)

### **IV. Recommended future work**

The participants recommended that a meeting on Human Resources Management and Training should take place in 2012, subject to the approval of the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians. The participants identified the following topics where exchange of experience and development of good practices are needed.

(a) Human Resources Management:

- Human Resources development and, more specifically, leadership development, which takes into account different institutional frameworks and e.g. the degree of centralization of the statistical office.
- Attracting and retaining young and qualified staff as a challenge in many national statistical offices.
- Motivation of staff: How to motivate younger and middle-management staff?
- Conducting staff surveys: Examples of staff surveys have been collected from a number of countries and made available online. For preparation of general guidelines and good practices, the collected material needs closer examination, taking into account the comments and suggestions made during the workshop.

(b) Training in statistical offices:

- How to organize in-house training? Some statistical offices have advanced training and development programs from which other statistical offices can learn.
- E-learning is applied in a growing number of statistical offices and there is a need for the transfer of experiences in this area.
- How to measure the costs and benefits of training?

The integration of HRMT activities in the overall business plan and in the strategic planning was mentioned as an important issue for future development.

The participants agreed on the need of developing more practical guidance on HRMT and compilation of good practices, and that more work is required for this purpose, taking into account institutional and cultural diversities in the region.

## **Annex: Summary of the presentations and discussions**

### **1. How to attract and retain staff for tomorrow**

#### **Module 1: Human Resources in Statistical Offices**

**Organiser: UNECE**

**Chair: Eszter Viragh, Hungarian Central Statistical Office**

The module on human resources in Statistical Offices focused on human resource management concept (HRMC) and staff opinion/satisfaction surveys. In this module papers from TRANSFER (Germany), Eurostat, UNECE, Federal Statistical Office of Germany and National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus were presented.

In his presentation Mr Hans-Joachim Rieger made the following comments:

- Human resources development should be considered the most important part in the management and development of statistical offices.
- HRM has to balance staff and organisation needs and should address all groups of staff.
- HRM should focus more on teams and support cooperation and team building, rather than (only) on individuals. Team work is more motivating and this should be reflected in the HRM practice.
- Motivation is a cornerstone in the development of human resources. The direct leader/supervisor is crucial for the motivation of staff. Ownership is important for motivation and self-motivation.
- The HRM has to prove successful, otherwise the activities will lose credibility, and people, staff and management, will not follow. “Shopping” between different management systems or picking up one tool after another without serious follow-up activities will not create ownership or sustainable results.
- The demands and tasks are changing, and people often have a preference for maintaining status quo and may not be interested in changes. On the other hand, the statistical offices need staffs that are ready and motivated for changes.
- The HRM should support the development of a learning organisation.

During the presentations and discussions the following points were made:

- Human Resources Management is, in general, important for the development of any organisation, while there is a tendency that HRM gets even more important in periods with shrinking resources.
- The Survey in early 2010 to NSOs on Human Resources Management inquired different aspects of HRM (e.g. recruitment, introduction programmes, job profiles, use of staff satisfaction surveys, career development) and could be used for self assessment by NSOs.
- The Survey on Staff Turnover showed that turnover of young staff members is widespread in small NSOs in the UNECE region, but generally not perceived as a problem. The majority of countries take some kind of measures to deal with the consequences of rapid turnover and in attracting young staff members. The most common reason for voluntary resignation is “inadequate payment”.
- Following Eurostat’s experience with staff satisfaction surveys such surveys are useful tools for the management. It was stressed that proper follow-up measures are crucial for the credibility of the survey activities. Timing and frequency of staff surveys are also

important points that may influence the perception and the results. Survey replies should be confidential.

- The development and use of staff satisfaction surveys differ widely among countries reflecting differences in the development of HRM and different cultures on HRM.
- The role of HRMT depends on the top management for which reason it is important to bring HRMT issues to the attention of the top management and obtain support.

**Module 2 (Parallel session): External vs. internal recruitment and future leaders in official statistics**

**Chair: Claudia Junker, Eurostat**

**Discussant: Hans-Joachim Rieger, TRANSFER, Germany**

The module on External and internal recruitment and future leaders in official statistics included presentations from Statistics Sweden, Statistics Canada, Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, Statistics Finland and Hungarian Central Statistical Office.

The presentations and discussion focused on the following main points:

- It was advised to implement a two-string leadership development system for managers and statistical experts, respectively. Managers with staff responsibility needs be trained in staff management and are not necessarily leading experts in their field of responsibility.
- Statistics Sweden's leadership programme aims to improve leadership, increase self-knowledge, improve personal development and create supportive network. To this end a leadership profile is set-up based on human, professional and business competences and individual capacities. The manager profile requires the manager to be business-, user-, improvement-, employees- and results-oriented.
- The establishment of a HR department and its inclusion in the business plan was considered necessary to ensure a unit with the required HR knowledge
- High staff turnover sometimes raises the question if it is worth training young staff members that may soon after leave?
- Challenging and heavy workload was not in general considered de-motivating! Feedback and recognition is motivating, flexible work time is a bonus for motivation.
- Brazil presented an example of competency-based staff management that helped defining and mapping institutional and functional competencies and produce development and learning plans for new leaders.
- Staff that does not perform are dealt with in very different ways in different countries, and exchange of good practices was found to be useful.
- The regular production of statistics also includes (important) routine work. HRM should also address this point.
- Working groups on specific issues such as staff appraisal, advanced training, leadership and staff development may be formed and can produce useful input to the HRM.
- More practical guidelines and examples for HRM in statistical offices with practical measures and tools would be useful.

**Module 3 (parallel session): The Statistical office as an attractive employer and measures to improve the work climate**

**Chair: Silvio Stoppoloni, Italian National Institute of Statistics**

**Discussant: Ineke van der Stoel, Statistics Netherlands**

Papers from Czech Statistical Office, Statistics Norway, Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics and Statistics Norway were presented during this module. Room documents from Israel Central Bureau of Statistics and Statistics Norway were also provided.

During the discussion the following points were made:

- Recruiting and retaining generation the “digital generation” that increasingly uses and is familiar with electronic medias and digital technology is a major challenge in many statistical offices. Advertisement in modern medias – e.g. Internet – and in modern language as well as cooperation with universities can help in the recruiting of the young generation.
- The image of the statistical office is crucial for its ability to attract the right people. Hence, the NSO needs be aware of its image and the values among the younger generation in order to attract the required candidates.
- It is also a challenge to the NSO to be perceived an attractive employer in competition with other institutions. Employer branding may be a tool become visible and attract the right people.
- To retain younger staff the NSO can offer special benefits for employees that could include e.g. training and education, flexible working hours, extra days holidays, international exposure etc. It is also beneficial to offer performance feedback, praise good efforts at work and encourage team spirit.
- Motivating employees is a long-term investment but is required to retain staff and develop the required competencies.
- Staff should be involved so share the organisation’s goals and identify themselves with these goals and get attached to the organisation.
- Offering responsibility, influence on work and making staff fell invested in helps to motivate and develop staff. A professional advancement career path that offers opportunity for promotion and development, based on proven professional ability, may help to retain qualified staff.
- It is important that the HRM addresses all staff groups and helps to both retain young and motivate older employees.
- The new introduction programme from Statistics Norway Strategy 2007 aims to create a positive start of new employees, create a better understanding of Statistics Norway, give an overall understanding of statistical activities, and contribute to creating professional and social contacts across departments.
- As examples of actions to retain talents were mentioned encouraging professional development, wages consistent with other federal institutes, professional growth through performance appraisal, integration programme for new staff and training programmes.

## 2. Training

### **Module 4: Leadership development**

**Organiser: Statistics Norway**

**Chair: Heidi Torstensen, Statistics Norway**

In the first part of the module Nicole Njaa, HEADWAY AS (Norway) provided a key note speech on Leadership development in Statistics Norway. Ms Njaa has been involved in the development of the human resources development program in Statistics Norway. In her presentation Ms. Njaa explained in details about the background of the program of which two main features were to develop a common platform for leadership in Statistics Norway and to have stronger focus on leadership as a discipline.

The programme has given staff a better understanding of their role in leadership, helped to increase ownership, and gave inspiration to strengthening leadership as a discipline. This far feedback on the programmes seminars and training courses has been positive. Ms Njaa underlined that the top management took ownership of the programme, that all managers participated and that this was important for a successful outcome. The exact improvement in day to day leadership as a result of the training is difficult to measure and it not as yet known.

Mr Rieger added that it is up to the top management to take the decision that leadership is important, and ensure that the leaders have the necessary time to lead and manage staff. If not leadership training is likely not to have lasting effects.

The second part of the module consisted of four interactive presentations on different aspects of leadership presented by Heidi Torstensen, Beate Johnsen, Nicole Njaa and Ingvild Moller Maanum (all Statistics Norway):

- 360 degree evaluation
- Leadership principles
- Change management
- Continuous learning

During this session participants had a chance to discuss different aspects of leadership in smaller groups and to do some practical exercises.

### **Module 5 (parallel session): How to identify and prioritise needs for training?**

**Chair: Chair: Carina Fransen, Statistics Netherlands**

**Discussant: Blagica Novkovska, State Statistical Office of Macedonia**

The papers presented were from National Statistical Office of UK, on behalf of the European Statistical System Learning and Development Framework (ESS-LDF) Task Force, Statistics Norway, Statistics Korea, and Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific.

Topics presented and discussed included:

- The ESS-LDF Competence Profile provides guidance to people working with the ESS and offers a reference frame identifying competencies.
- Knowledge sharing is important for a learning organisation. The question of how to develop and implement a culture of effective knowledge sharing was raised as an important issue and the need for exchange of good practices was stressed.

- The development of a competence framework involves discussion of competences in a systematic way and raising awareness among employees about their own competences. It was advised to develop statistical competences profiles on national level and to share experiences.
- More responsibility and influence on own work motivates staff to work harder and develop their skills!
- Statistics Korea presented the work on recruitment and development of staff that include obligatory courses, performance management and use of professional networks. The importance of e-learning courses was highlighted.
- How to organise and evaluate in-house training? There is a general need to develop outcome indicators to measure the effects of training in terms of e.g. improvements in efficiency and quality of work.
- SIAP presented its core skills framework used to identify skills required by NSOs, divided in core statistical skills, specialist statistical skills and statistical management skills. A SIAP survey in the region showed increasing need for training.
- There is a need to develop sustainable strategies on national and international level on learning and development in statistical institutions to increase quality and efficiency of work in statistical offices.
- Measurement of the impacts of training is difficult. Self-evaluation was mentioned as one possible way to obtain information about the impacts.

**Module 6 (parallel session): Organisation of training activities and tools/methods for training**

**Chair: Kurt Wass, EFTA**

**Discussant: Marius Ejby Poulsen, Statistics Denmark**

During this module were presented papers from Eurostat, Italian National Institute of Statistics, Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation, Statistics Finland and Hungarian Central Statistical Office.

Summary of presentations and discussions:

- International networking is an important part of the statistical training and can be offered to staff. Success in training programs: common aim, communication, sharing of experiences. “Sharing of good practices” one of the areas of future investment.
- Training to sustain professional competence is important. Training programme should contain both classroom and distance learning, depending on the subject taught.
- One good way of sharing knowledge in the organisation is by using senior experts as trainers, and highlighting good practices during the training classes.
- The conditions for developing and conducting training are very different because of differences in size and structure of the organisation.
- How to provide the right motivation for the e-learning courses? There is a difference in the level of self-organisation and motivation among participants. Financial motivation and final exams have a positive effect on the completion of courses. For e-learning, special time should be allocated for the learning activities by the organisation.
- Organising “groups of students” of young statisticians helps them to integrate in the office environment, assist in professional growth, and create conditions for productive work.
- Italy presented a new concept of different types of learning – the Learnscape. It includes learning by: orienteering, classroom, context, catching the occasion, through new offers,

websurfing, “through”, step by step, comparing and adapting. Different components of the learnscape could be selected.

### **3. Concluding session**

#### **Module 7: Reports of the parallel sessions**

**Organiser: UNECE**

**Chair: Gabriel Gamez, UNECE**

The reports of the parallel modules were presented by the respective discussants. The summary of the respective modules is included under modules 2, 3, 5 and 6.

#### **Module 8: Future work**

**Organiser: UNECE**

**Chair: Gabriel Gamez, UNECE**

**Invited Speakers: Blagica Novkovska, Jan Byfuglien, Wesly Miles and Lev Lovat**

The Module consisted of a panel discussion with the following participants: Blagica Novkovska (The State statistical Office of Macedonia), Jan Byfuglien (Statistics Norway), Wesly Miles (ONS, UK) and Lev Lovat (ROSSTAT, Russian Federation).

The outcome of the discussion is summarised under point IV of the report, Recommended future work.