

Continuing Training at a Statistical Agency as a Key Factor of Human Resource Management

Geneva, 15-17 October 2014

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Federal State Statistics Service (Rosstat) is a federal body of executive power. Since May 2012 Rosstat directly reports to the Government of the Russian Federation.

The special feature of Rosstat functioning as a statistical agency is the need to consider the size and the geopolitical situation of the country: the vast territories and distances, a variety of natural-climatic, geographic and economical, as well as social, political, ethnic, and cultural conditions of different regions.

System of state statistics includes the Rosstat's central office at the federal level and the regional offices, located in all regions of the Russian Federation, as well as organizations under the jurisdiction of the Federal State Statistics Service (**slide No.2**).

Structure of the central office of Rosstat is represented on the **slide No. 3**. Key role in relations with the staff belongs to the Administrative department, the most important function of which, in addition to organizational and administrative issues is the training and development of the personnel. Directly engaged in this process are two divisions: State (civil) service Division and Personnel training Division.

Currently, the state statistics system employs more than 20 thousand federal civil employees, more than 600 of whom work in the central office of Rosstat. Personnel optimization program took place in the period from 2011 to 2013. During three (3) years 2,366 (10%) positions were cancelled in the Federal State Statistics Service. *The optimization of the regional offices has resulted in the transition from the 3-level management structure (central office - the regional office - district) to a 2-level (central office and regional office).*

Currently Rosstat staffing is 92.6%; inter alia, central office – 88.8%, regional offices – 96.4%.

Age structure of Rosstat's employees is represented on the **slide No. 4**. Here we can see that a significant proportion of government employees are between the ages of 50 to 59 years old – more than 45% in the central office of Rosstat and 35% in its regional offices. Young people under the age of 30 years are about 23% in the central office of Rosstat and about 15% - in the regional offices. 47.7% of Rosstat's central office employees and 64% of employees in its regional offices have work experience of more than 10 years in the system of official statistics. The average age in the central office is 44 years and 47 years – in the regional offices.

For managerial positions the average age is over 50 years. That is why the current process is to rejuvenate the staff of this group of civil servants.

In the central office, male employees count for 19.6%, female – 80.4%, and the regional offices are made up of 7.3% male, and 92.7% female. Thus, we're facing very acute gender problem and the related need to address a number of social issues (maternity leave, child care up to 3 years, the creation of conditions for single mothers raising a child, etc.).

The following table (**slide No. 5**) reflects the level of education of employees. In the central office of Rosstat 91.4% of them have higher professional education and more than 78.4% – in the regional offices. Out of them more than 70% have specialized in economics. A significant part of civil employees in the regional offices (over 22%) have secondary vocational education. Despite the generally high level of personnel with a university degree, we are concerned about the prospect of losing educational and scientific potential of statistical training in institutions of higher education in Russia in connection with its transition to the 2 level systems ("bachelor" - "master") and the absence of independent specialty – "statistics".

Challenges of the modern life require for improving the quality of statistical staff at all levels, possessing key skills in the field of international standards and statistics practices, of modern information technology and general statistical culture.

In order to solve this problem, the Federal State Statistics Service established **a system of continuous training and development** of civil employees (**slide No. 6**).

Thus it is possible to allocate 2 the interconnected areas of work: training of personnel for Rosstat and both, professional development and additional vocational education of public employees. When planning and carrying out this work along with Rosstat several educational institutions, located both in Moscow and in regions, participate. The period of planning covers from 1 year to 3 years.

The system of lifelong learning and improving the training of statisticians includes as well the objective to increase statistical literacy of Russian citizens, promotion of statistics, since high school.

*Thus, for the primary acknowledgement of students with representation and description forms of the statistics for students in grades 7-9 is developed a textbook "Probability Theory and Statistics", as well as a manual for teachers (**slide No. 7**). This course is taught in schools of the Russian Federation on an optional basis.*

Attracting students to the world of statistics is also carried out with the help of educational and vocational guidance in educational institutions (schools, colleges), including inter alia organization of entertaining competitions and contests. So, in 2013, the State Statistics Service has supported the initiative of young professionals from the regional offices to participate in an international

project of the International Statistical learning project (ISLP) to organize and conduct the competition posters on statistics among students.

The leading role in the development of statistical education belongs to universities. **Slide No. 8** shows major universities of the country, working closely with the Federal State Statistics Service. This interaction is carried out for many years and has its own traditions.

We can identify the following areas of cooperation (**slide No.9**).

On the basis of agreements between the Federal State Statistics Service and partner-universities the **targeted training** of specialists with higher education takes place (15 agreements were concluded in 2014).

Since 2013, training of statisticians based on educational contracts with further employment by the state statistics bodies has started (so far 8 contracts were signed).

Students, attending full-or part-time classes or obtaining master's degree have the right to flexible working hours, vacations for passing examinations etc., to have an internship in the workplace. As a rule, this category of students continues career in the statistical agency.

The modern model of statistics stipulates for thorough study by students of disciplines such as: macroeconomic statistics; demographic statistics; statistics of public opinion; statistics of political system; medical statistics; education statistics; cultural statistics; environmental statistics; justice statistics; technology statistics; statistics of science and innovation, and others.

Prominent statisticians of Rosstat actively participate in shaping the educational programs of universities, as well as in the educational process. Students enrolled at the statistics, annually enjoy their practices in the structures of the statistical service, which allows them to acquire practical experience in the process of learning. Annual internships for professors and lecturers of the universities engaged in training of statisticians are organized in the central office of Rosstat. More than 100 persons have had their training and practice in 2014 *in the central office* of Rosstat.

An important area of cooperation with universities is **popularization of statistics among the young students**. Annually under the auspices of the Federal State Statistics Service a series of activities aimed at the implementation of this goal are conducted. The biggest one is the Annual All-Russian Student Statistics Olympiad, conducted on the basis of the Moscow State University of Economics, Statistics and Informatics. Representatives of Educational and Methodological Association for Statistics Education, National Research University "Higher School of Economics", State University of Management and Financial University under the Government of the Russian Federation actively participate in the preparation of the Olympiad. Holding such events is aimed at popularizing of statistics, improving statistical literacy and general statistical culture, improving the quality of training, as well as at identification of talented young people. During the Olympiad students demonstrate knowledge in the field of statistical analysis of the socio-economic processes and phenomena. Content quests are designed to stimulate cognitive and creative activity of students to consolidate the theoretical

knowledge and practical skills in the analysis of socio-economic phenomena and processes with the use of modern information technology.

All-Russian Student Statistics Olympiad is relatively new competition, but, despite this, it is already a valuable and student popular event, engaging a variety of universities in the country. Thus, the Olympiad in 2013 was attended by representatives of 37 universities and more than 100 students, and the Olympiad in 2014 embraced 52 high schools and 156 students (**slide No. 10**). Summing up the results of the Olympiad and the awarding of the winners and nominees is traditionally solemnly held in the premises of the Federal State Statistics Service, in the presence of Rosstat management, members of the jury, the rector of Moscow State University of Economics, Statistics and Informatics, representatives of universities and the media.

Next year we plan to bring to the Olympic Statistics Movement universities in other countries, which will improve the status of this Olympiad to the international level and to expand the boundaries of the event.

In addition, Rosstat renders support to self-organization of young people in the framework of the Council of young statisticians. The Council holds annual meetings, rallies, sporting events. Youth is joining scientific creativity: participates in the competition for the best analytical note of young statisticians in the International Association of Official Statistics (IAOS) for the best scientific publication of young statisticians. In 2012-2013 six (6) best publications were sent to IAOS, and all the works by the participants are posted on Rosstat's website.

Priority area of continuous education and development of employees of Rosstat is additional professional education on the basis of the existing higher or **secondary vocational education**. The main objectives in this area are shown in the **slide No. 11**.

Additional vocational training has the following types (**slide No.12**).

So-called Individual professional development plans (a kind of employee's "portfolio") constitute a basis for Rosstat's personnel training programs. They have been developed on the base of the Rosstat's "Program for professional development of federal civil employees of the Federal State Statistics Service" approved by the Director General of Rosstat and the Federal plan of statistical works (**slide No. 13**).

Organization of professional retraining and advanced training of civil employees of Rosstat is carried out in accordance with the government order on a competitive basis under the auspices of appropriately licensed educational institutions within the limits of budget financing.

Educational institutions, implementing programs of additional vocational training for civil employees, independently determine the content and technology of training process. At the same time, there is close interaction between structural units of Rosstat with the training courses lecturers both at the stage of discussing the content of programs, and in the process of learning. Professional retraining, advanced training of civil employees is being conducted during the entire term of civil service at least once every 3 years. Every year more than 3,000 Rosstat employees attend courses to improve their professional skills (**slide No.14**).

The following methods and training practices are widely used during the training process:

- delivering instructions and implementation of special training programs for young employees on career development, familiarization with the agency, obtaining expertise etc.;
- *production and economic study in accordance with the Federal plan of statistical works*;
- combination of individual and group training approach;
- combination of internal (in-office) and external training with engagement of high-reputable foreign and domestic experts;
- teamwork, business games, trainings, etc.;
- survey of students and heads of structural units at the end of training courses in order to determine the efficiency and quality of education.

In recent years, the rapid development of information society has contributed to the fact, that *e - learning* as well as distance learning technologies (95.4% of all trained) has become prevailing type of additional vocational training of Rosstat employees. This ensures rapid delivery of modern content directly to the student and prompt feedback from the audience, and makes the learning process more economical, intense and effective (**slide No.15**). The leading economic institutes and universities as well as accredited training centers of additional vocational training with great experience of e-learning have become Rosstat's partners in staff training.

In order to monitor the effectiveness of training and basing on the experience of several foreign countries Rosstat starting from 2014 will be introducing a new form of quality assessment on the ground of double questioning students and managers that in the future will allow for rating analysis of educational institutions, as well as for improving selection of educational organizations for the purpose of staff training.

As part of the project "Development of the State Statistics System-2" there have been established training centers (federal interagency training classes), intended to ensure constant trainings for employees of regional offices of Rosstat and *the temporary personnel attracted during censuses and inspections*. Their intensive operation showed the effectiveness and usefulness of this kind of organization. Thus, in the period from 2012 to 2013 over 100 events involving 867 employees of regional offices of Rosstat were held in federal classrooms (in Moscow, Kislovodsk and Gelendzhik) (**slides No. 16-17**). According to the participants of seminars and meetings, all the activities in the classrooms were performed at a good level, were informative and helpful for professionals (as evidenced by the events' logs and participants' questionnaires).

Thus, the current system of continuous staff education, created in the Federal State Statistics Service covers a wide range of the Agency's employees, allows to utilize a variety of forms and methods of training for their evolution, which contributes to a more effective use of Rosstat's human resources, to the formation of human potential capable of change and modernization of the state statistics in Russia.