



INTERNATIONAL  
CENTER FOR  
HUMAN  
DEVELOPMENT  
THINK TANK



## January – March 2020 Report on the implemented works

It should be specially noted that many activities planned to be implemented in February-March 2020 (including trainings, workshops and study visits), had to be moved to later dates due the COVID-19 virus pandemic and the Armenian Government lockdown declared until 24 April 2020.

### **Activity 0.1. Assessing the current situation**

During the first quarter of 2020, Lead Expert (K-1) carried out one mission where he met with Mr Stepan Mnatsakanyan, SC RA President, Mr Gagik Gevorgyan, Deputy President of the SCRA and National Project Director (NPD), and Mr Tigran Gevorgyan, National Project Coordinator (NPC), and discussed a wide range of issues covering all key elements supporting the project's smooth and timely implementation. In addition, K-1 had a series of recurrent meetings with the SCRA Division Heads involved in the project implementation. Among the issues discussed were the following: (i) detailed discussion of the activities included in the Project Implementation Plan to be accomplished in the first (Q1) and second (Q2) quarters of 2020; (ii) moving selected activities from Q1 2020 to later dates, as necessary; (iii) clarification of issues related to the preparation and approval of the ToR of key and non-key experts; (iv) experts' work vis-à-vis their Terms of Reference (ToR) and mission agendas; (v) setting the dates for experts' missions and study visits, etc.

As a result of K-1 work, a number of notable changes have been made in the Project Implementation Plan, most of which were due to objective reasons such as lack of progress made with the approval of the SC RA structure and job descriptions linked with the corresponding decrees to be approved by the Prime Minister's Office, new developments resulting from the

UNECE/EUROSTAT Sectorial Review of the SC RA IT performance (Activity 3.3.2) or limited time originally allocated for the absorption and use of materials presented to the SC RA specialists by international experts.

Thus, to officialise the change made in the Project Work Plan, *Protocol No. 4 on the Project Implementation Plan: 2.4.2. Developing methodology and recommendations on the upgrade of system of administrative registers* was signed by Mr Gagik Ananyan, direct supervisor of the SC RA Construction Statistics Division in his capacity as a Deputy President of the SCRA, by Mr Gagik Gevorgyan, Deputy President of the SCRA and National Project Director and Ms Mariam Petrosyan, Head of Construction Statistics Division. In accordance with the Protocol No. 4 and given that NK-6 had already implemented the tasks covered by Activity 2.4.2 during her first mission (30 September to 4 October 2019), her second mission was taken out from the Project Work Plan.

Further, at request of Ms Alina Grigoryan, Head of Social Sphere Statistics Division, *Activity 2.14.1. Conducting assessment of housing system, providing recommendations, developing methodological guidelines and instruments* has been replaced by a study visit on the transition from ISCED 1997 to ISCED 2011 and introduction of ISCED-F 2013 (tentatively scheduled to take place in Q2 2020). The JV GOPA is currently looking for an appropriate NSO to organise such a study visit.

The reason for the above request being a change in the Division's priorities since the Project's ToR were developed. Moreover, the new Activity 2.14.1 would be directly linked with Activity 2.14.2 and Activity 2.14.3 that deal with ISCED 2011 and ISCED-F 2013.

The above request for the modification of the Project Implementation Plan was duly documented in *Protocol No. 5 On the modification of the Project Implementation Plan: Activity 2.14.1. Conducting assessment of housing system, providing recommendations, developing methodological guidelines and instruments*.

In addition, K-1 regularly met with the Management of ICHD (JV Consortium member), where he discussed various topical issues linked with the project implementation.

### **Activity 1.1.3.: Recommendations on procedures for implementation of the new Law, legal drafts on operational procedures**

Key Expert -2 is responsible for the implementation of the four activities grouped under Task 1.1, namely A.1.1.1; A.1.1.2; A.1.1.3; and A.1.1.5.

During this reporting period, K-2 continued working on Activity 1.1.3.

The statute of the structural units of the Statistical Committee of RA was endorsed by the Decree of the President of the Statistical Committee of RA N 53-L dated 16 July 2019. Most of the recommendations provided by K-2 under the Assessment of Institutional Capacity of the SC RA (Activity 1.1.1 on structural and functional aspects related to effective implementation of the provisions of the 2018 Law on Official Statistics of RA) were considered in the revised charters included in the above Decree.

As for the enhancement of the compliance of the operating procedures related to the requirements of the 2018 Law on Official Statistics across the National Statistical System, the process was initiated with the efforts of the Working Group created in mid-2019, and the progress made was discussed at regular WG meetings since then.

Given the progress made, it is would be possible to conclude that K-2 has accomplished his work on Activity 1.1.3. Yet, as a complete implementation of this activity is interrelated with *Activity 1.2.1. Conducting assessment of gaps of SC RA staff skills, elaborating Guidelines for performance management and training for the SC RA staff*, its final implementation can be accepted only after the completion of tasks planned to be carried out during the second advisory mission of Key Expert 3. Due to objective reasons, the second mission of K-3 was moved to Q1 2020.

However, the COVID 19 pandemic and the quarantine imposed in Armenia and Ukraine required making a number of drastic corrections in the Project Implementation Plan, and the second mission of K-3 had to be tentatively moved to Q2 2020 until further notice from the WHO.

Moreover, in the meantime, the SC RA President has approved a new SC RA Structure (Divisions and Units) and the job titles of its staff members by Order No. 180-U on the Internal

Units and the Staff of Established Units (staff list) of the Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia dated 23.12.2019. Moreover, the job titles of the SC RA staff members were approved by the SC RA President Order No. 114-U dated 20.03.2020. Government of the Republic of Armenia has approved a new SC RA Structure (Divisions and Units) and the job titles of its staff members. Consequently, it is not possible to make any changes in the approved descriptions.

Therefore, in order to benefit from K-3 knowledge and expertise, Mr. Araik Hayrapetyan, SC RA General Secretary, asked the JV GOPA Project Management to consider replacing the original tasks planned under Activity 1.2.1 with the preparation of tests for, and conducting a training on how to organise a proper competition for positions under the new SC structure and in line with the revised job titles.

After negotiation with K-3, it was agreed that he would carry out his second mission with the above objective.

**Activity 1.1.5: Review the current legislation, procedures and protocols and propose to the SC RA a format for consultations**

The implementation of this activity is closely interrelated with a series of decisions to be made by the Prime Minister on the structure and responsibilities of the governmental institutions and their staff members.

In discussion with the representative of the NSS institutions and partner organisations, it was recommended that the SC RA should use the Public Council of the Users of RA Official Statistics as the most proper format for extended consultations on the use of the *2021 Population Census* results for a sampling frame of household surveys in Armenia (the ultimate objective of Activity 1.1.5 is to agree on the use of the 2021 Population Census results to prepare a *master sampling frame* for household surveys in Armenia).

Notably, it was recommended to discuss the use of the 2021 Population Census data at the upcoming session of the Public Council of Users of RA Official Statistics (to be held some time after the end of the pandemic lock down). K-2 should make a special presentation to the meeting participants on the key issues linked with the use of the census data. The presentation should be based on the review of international practices and recommendations facilitating the use of relevant micro-data that K-2 prepared already at the request of SC RA top management.

### **Activity 1.2.6. Preparing draft NSPS for 2021-2025**

The main objective of the National Strategy Program for Strengthening of the National Statistical System (NSPS) is to define the target model of the national system of official statistics, and to propose the strategy and the roadmap of the development of official statistics in the longer term. The NSPS shall contain indicative strategic directions for the development of the SC RA and the National Statistical System (NSS), taking into account national needs and goals, international commitments, constraints and prerequisites for achieving the goals under specific national and regional conditions. On the other hand, it shall determine the fundamental approaches, methods, tools and actions of strategic importance, necessary for statistical capacity building in terms of its key role in developing a sound, modern and comprehensive NSS of the Republic of Armenia.

Key Expert 2 is responsible for the implementation of this activity. The work is being done in consultation with K-1.

Following recommendations on the process of preparing a Draft NSPS 2021-2025 provided by the Team Leader and after discussions with the SC RA senior management held in November 2019 and January 2020, K-2 prepared a *Draft Technical Framework and a Roadmap for Developing the National Strategy Program for Strengthening of the National Statistical System of the Republic of Armenia for 2021-2025* as well as a detailed Work Plan for the preparation of the Draft NSPS. These materials were submitted to the SC RA for revision, comments and suggestions.

In the meantime, K-2 has prepared another document to be reviewed by the SC RA senior management with Recommendations on Initiating a Process of Developing the NSPS 2021-2025 within the SC RA. In this document, K-2 provided a set of guidelines for the SC RA structural units (content- and format-wise) related to their inputs for the preparation of the Draft NSPS 2021-2025, based on recommendations and materials provided by K-1.

## **April – June 2020**

The pandemic situation worldwide in general and the situation with the project implementation in the second quarter 2020, in particular, was characterised by a continued series of difficulties linked with the COVID-19 virus lockdown declared by the Government of the Republic of Armenia. Thus, the lockdown declared as of March 2020 until 15 May 2020 was temporarily prolonged until 15 July 2020 due to the growing number of contaminations. Moreover, according to the available information, the country would remain be closed for international flights until the end of August 2020.

Given the above, all advisory missions of international experts began to be carried out remotely during the period under review.

Thus, K-1 carried out one remote mission where he had remote meetings with Mr Stepan Mnatsakanyan, SC RA President, Mr Gagik Gevorgyan, Deputy President of the SCRA and Project Director, and Mr Tigran Gevorgyan, National Project Coordinator (NPC), and discussed a wide range of issues covering all key elements supporting the project's smooth and timely implementation. In addition, K-1 had a series of remote meetings with the Division Heads involved in the project implementation. Among the issues discussed were the following: (i) detailed discussion of the activities included in the Project Implementation Plan to be accomplished in the second (Q2) and third (Q3) quarters of 2020; (ii) moving selected activities from Q2 2020 to later dates, as necessary; (iii) clarification of issues related to the preparation and approval of the ToR of key and non-key experts; (iv) experts' remote work vis-à-vis their Terms of Reference (ToR) and mission agendas; (v) setting the dates for experts' remote missions and study visits, etc.

As a result of K-1 work, a number of notable changes were introduced in the Project Implementation Plan, most of which were due to objective reasons such as a slow-down of working pace due to the lockdown to home of most of the key SC RA staff members and project counterparts as well as local key and non-key experts, organisation of remote meetings with the project international experts that required considerable no-cost extension of experts' remote mission days, etc.

One of the key issues discussed by K-1 with Mr Stepan Mnatsakanyan, SC RA President, and Mr Gagik Gevorgyan, Deputy President of the SC RA and Project Director was the Project's extension. Mr. Mnatsakanyan informed K-1 that the SC RA had started the process of the Project extension.

The implementation of *Activity 1.2.1 Conducting assessment of gaps of SC RA staff skills, elaborating Guidelines for performance management and training for the SC RA staff* was another long-date outstanding issue discussed by K-1 during his remote mission.

It was agreed that during his second mission (*Activity 1.2.1. Conducting assessment of gaps of SC RA staff skills, elaborating Guidelines for performance management and training for the SC RA staff*) K-3 should produce the following outputs: (i) a set of skill tests to verify qualification of candidates participating in competitions to fill job vacancies in SC RA Divisions, matching a new SC RA structure, and (ii) conducting a training for the HR staff on how to organise such competitions.

### **Activity 1.1.3. Recommendations on procedures for implementation of the new Law, legal drafts on operational procedures**

K-2 participated in the meetings and contributed to the work of the *Working Group on the Implementation of the 2018 Law on Official Statistics*. In his work he was supported by NK-15.

The second meeting of 2020 of the WG was held on 29 June 2020. It should be noted that during the meeting's preparation, K-2 discussed its agenda with Mr Gagik Ananyan, WG Chair, Member of the State Council on Statistics and Mr Tigran Gevorgyan, National Project Coordinator. The agenda of the meeting included a discussion of the progress made towards the implementation of the recommendations provided under the Twinning Project and by the WG on the revision of relevant legislation, procedures and protocols and the development of legal drafts to enhance compliance with the provisions of the 2018 Law on Official Statistics.

Finally, the WG discussed the list of normative acts adopted by the RA State Council on Statistic as recommended by the WG meeting held earlier this year to enhance compliance with and to increase effectiveness of the implementation of the 2018 Law on Official Statistics. Thus, the SCS adopted 15 normative Legal Acts and invalidated those that were not duly in line with the provisions of the 2018 Law on Official Statistics. These Acts mostly concerned statistical reporting forms and instructions on their completion in relevant statistical domains.

The major output of K-2 on this activity: *Recommendations on procedures for implementation of the new Law, legal drafts on operational procedures*.

### **Activity 1.1.5. Review the current legislation, procedures and protocols and propose to the SC RA a format for consultations**

The implementation of this activity is closely interrelated with a series of decisions made by the Prime Minister on the structure and responsibilities of the governmental institutions and their staff members.

Talking about this activity with K-1 during his May remote mission, K-2 recalled that the Public Council of Users of Official Statistics had been established by the Decree of the Prime Minister of RA No. 1293-A “On Endorsing the Individual Composition of the Public Council of Users of Official Statistics of the Republic of Armenia” dated 13 September 2019. Due to the COVID-19 virus-related lockdown, the Public Council could not hold its meeting session in Q2 2020, as originally planned.

In order to advance in his work during the COVID-19 lockdown, K-2 discussed and agreed with the PIT that the presentation of the review of international practices and recommendations for facilitating the use of relevant micro-data should be replaced with a circulation of the above review among the SC RA relevant subject specialists and members of the Public Council of Users of Official Statistics. Thereafter, based on specific recommendations, a draft protocol of procedures will be developed with a request to grant access to micro data for research purposes subject to statistical confidentiality (so called anonymised data). Such access would allow the use of micro data for independent scientific research projects. It is expected that relevant SCS RA decisions will be drafted and adopted in Q4 2020. However, it should be noted that this work will be done outside Activity 1.1.5.

### **Activity 1.2.6. Preparing draft NSPS for 2021-2025**

Following the recommendations on the process of preparing a Draft NSPS 2021-2025 provided by the Team Leader (K-1) and after discussions with the SC RA senior management held in November 2019 and January 2020, K-2 prepared a *Draft Technical Framework and a Roadmap for Developing the National Strategy Program for Strengthening of the National Statistical System of the Republic of Armenia for 2021-2025*.

As part of his responsibilities, K-1 had reviewed the above draft, wrote its second version and sent it to K-2 for perusal and further action. In particular, it was expected that to enhance the transparency of the developmental process, the SC RA and RA State Council on Statistics would discuss progress made on the preparation of the draft NSPS 2021-2025 with the Public Council of Users of Official Statistics.

K-2 discussed with Mr Gagik Gevorgyan, National Project Director and SC RA Deputy President, and the NPC progress towards endorsing the Technical Framework and Roadmap for Developing the National Strategy Program for Strengthening of the National Statistical System of the Republic of Armenia for 2021-2025. During a remote meeting K-2 informed K-1 that the SC RA would need further consultations regarding the resources available for the implementation of the *Technical Framework* and the Roadmap under the COVID-19 related restrictions. It was agreed that by early August 2020 the *Technical Framework and the Roadmap* would either be approved as it stood (upon availability of required resources) or revised to ensure feasibility of inputs and efficiency of the process under the COVID-19 restrictions.

#### **Activity 2.2.4. Conducting assessment on financial account and balance sheet**

Non-Key Expert 4 carried out a remote advisory mission from 11-17 June 2020. The main mission's objective has been a review of work implemented by the Statistics Committee of the Republic of Armenia (SC RA) in the compilation of the financial accounts in accordance with the System of National Accounts 2008 (SNA 2008). More specifically, the objectives of the mission were as follows:

- Assess data sources for the compilation of the financial accounts;
- Identify gaps in data sources;
- Develop recommendations and road map for introducing the financial account and the financial balance sheet;
- Develop the terms of reference for a software for data processing of the financial accounts.

The mission was conducted remotely using video conferences. NK-4 worked closely with the staff of the SC RA Finance Statistics Division. In addition, he also conducted joint meetings with the staff members of the Central Bank of Armenia (CBA) and the Ministry of Finance (MOF) to discuss the availability of data for the compilation of the financial accounts for the financial sector, the external sector, and the general government.

NK-4 worked with the staff of the SC RA Finance Statistics Division and met with compilers of financial statistics of the Central Bank and the Ministry of Finance in reviewing available data sources, identifying data that could potentially be used, as well as data gaps for the development of the financial accounts and balance sheets. The review focused mostly on the work implemented by the SC RA in collecting basic data and the compilation of the financial balance sheet.

NK-4 discussed methodological and conceptual issues raised by the staff. Among these issues were the calculations of revaluation and transactions from data on positions. NK-4 stressed that usually there should be no issues of revaluation with assets such as deposits and

loans in local currency. NK-4 further explained that revaluations could affect these assets only when denominated in foreign currency.

In result of his mission, NK-4 produced the following outputs:

- Assessment report on the existing methods and practices of collecting data required for the compilation of financial account and balance sheet and on identification of the gaps in data sources;
- Recommendations and roadmap for introducing the financial account and balance sheet of financial assets and liabilities;
- Terms of Reference for software for data processing on financial account and balance sheet of assets and liabilities for each economy sector in line with the SNA-2008.

**Activity 2.8.1. Conducting assessment of indicators on the impact of ecological conditions, providing recommendations and developing a Reporting System on Life Quality Statistics**

Non-Key Expert 9 carried out a remote advisory mission to the SC RA from 20 April to 22 May 2020 with the ultimate objective to improve the indicators of the environmental impact and life statistics. More specifically, the mission objective was to:

- Assess the indicators currently used by the SC RA to reflect the impact of ecological conditions on health, vital activities, and life quality statistics related to ecological aspects, as well as the environmental statistics at large;
- Develop recommendations for upgrading relevant indicators including glossary and survey instruments;
- Develop Road Map for creating the Reporting System on the Life Quality Statistics related to ecological aspects based on GIS systems within the framework of the Working Group on the Environment Related Life Quality Statistics (WGERLQS).

Based on his mission findings, NK-9 produced the following outputs:

- Assessment report;
- Recommendations for upgrading relevant indicators including glossary and survey instruments;
- Working Group on the Environment Related Life Quality Statistics established;
- Roadmap to upgrade indicators related to environmental quality of life.

### **Activity 2.12.1. Developing indicators, conceptual framework, methodology and instruments for DV and GBV**

Non-Key Expert 11 carried out her remote advisory mission from 11-29 May 2020 with the objectives to develop:

- Statistical indicators to measure domestic violence against women (VAW) based on advanced international practice,
- Conceptual framework, methodology and instruments for a domestic gender-based violence (GBV) Survey in line with the methodology recommended by the United Nations (UNSD or UNECE or UN Women etc.). Under the GBV should be understood violence against both men and women. Such methodology should include, but not be limited to, definitions of survey variables, mode of data collection, questionnaire(s), guidelines for interviewers and supervisors, selection of interviewers, ethical issues in data collection, sampling, sampling design, sample size determination, data imputation, weighting, computing sampling error, data quality control, testing a questionnaire etc.
- Key indicators and format of data presentation, draft tabulation plan to support the data analysis, data analysis and report writing protocols including structure, format and contents of the report.

At the end of her remote mission, NK-11 made the following recommendations:

- Set up of Steering committee and engage with national stakeholders including GBV survey programmers.
- Carefully consider ethics of collecting VAW data. The current situation with COVID-19 makes collecting data on VAW even more challenging because in many situations women are either locked down or are spending more time in close proximity with potential abusers.
- Review the timelines for the VAW survey.
- Continue using the WHO methodology developed for the VAW surveys
- Review question by question the VAW survey questionnaire.

- Ensure that a strong statistical analyst is appointed to conduct the VAW survey data analysis.

The mission major output: Indicators, conceptual framework, methodology and instruments for measuring DV and GBV.

**Activity 2.14.2. Conducting assessment on education statistics and providing recommendations, developing instruments for implementing the recommendations**

Key Expert 8 carried out a remote consultative mission from 16 to 22 June 2020 to: (i) assess the existing practices of the SC RA education statistics; (ii) provide recommendation for the transition to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) 2011; (iii) provide recommendation for the ISCED fields of education and training 2013 (ISCED-F 2013); and (iv) develop instruments for the implementation of the above recommendations.

As a result of her mission, K-8 produced the following major outputs:

- Assessment report on the existing SC RA education statistics;
- Recommendation for the transition to ISCED-2011;
- Recommendation for the introduction of ISCED-F 2013.

### **Activity 3.2.1. Developing communication strategy for the SC RA**

Key Expert-10 is responsible for the implementation of this activity. In his work he is supported by Non-Key Expert 14. K-10 and NK-14 continued working on the implementation of this activity throughout Q2 2020 and submitted a draft Communication Strategy to the SC RA on 15 March 2020.

Thus, due to the COVID-19 prolonged government lockdown, the experts had on-line (remote) daily discussions with by Ms. Narine Musheghyan, Head, and specialists of the SC RA Statistical Information Dissemination Division.

Because of that work, K-10 could edit the final draft Communication Strategy and got clearance by Ms. Narine Musheghyan. Thereafter, the draft Communication Strategy document was circulated among the members of the SC RA State Council for Statistics for its final clearance.

**Activity 3.3.1. Conducting assessment of current practices of media engagement, publication and communication at the SC RA and providing recommendations, developing instruments for media engagement, delivering templates, delivering job mentoring**

Key Expert-10 supported by NK-14, is in charge of the implementation of this activity. This activity is interrelated with Activities 3.2.1 and 3.3.2 whose implementation has been moved to Q3 2020. Consequently, Activity 3.3.1 has also been moved to Q3 2020.

It is planned that K-10 will approach a new [on-line/remote] methodology of skills transfers based on the proven to be efficient on-line (remote) discussions held on the SC RA Communication Strategy (see Activity3.2.1 above). The assessment will be carried out in Q3 2020.

Executor: Project Implementation Team