

International Technical Support

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Editorial

SUMMARY

Editorial	1
Special report on short term indices	2
- Short-term indicators: actions in 2014 with pilot countries in sub-Saharan Africa and the Maghreb	2
- Short-term indicators: thirteen actions in 2014 with Eastern European countries and the CIS, all with different expectations	4
INSEE's involvement in implementing SNA 2008 in Africa	6
The workshop meeting between experts on resources-uses tables in Africa	6
Socio-economic impacts of the earthquake in Haiti: taking stock 5 years on	7
TABLO models, a natural complement to the ERETES software	8
Report on the twinning with Macedonia	9
2014 News in brief	10
Well-deserved retirements!	16

This new issue of the International Technical Support newsletter includes a special report on short-term indicators. Although not very well known to the general public, these indices are defined in European regulations, transmitted every month to Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Union, and they often appear among the "Principal European Economic Indicators" (PEEI).

They measure variations in production activity, turnover and prices in the main sectors of the economy: industry, construction, trade, services, and often by analogy, agriculture, which depends strictly speaking on a particular gentleman's agreement.

Produced at INSEE by the Department of Short-term Statistics, these indicators are disseminated to users outside the Institute, public or private bodies wishing to monitor the economic outlook of different sectors of the economy. They are also used extensively internally: they are of interest to national accountants, who use them to produce their quarterly and annual accounts, and to economists, who compare them with the results of the business tendency surveys.

In 2014, the number of cooperation actions carried out by INSEE in this field was particularly high, reflecting a growing demand from countries on the African continent and from those in and around the European Union, hence the subject of the report that opens this newsletter.

Readers will also discover several articles on other subjects, in particular on the involvement of our Institute in implementing the System of National Accounts (SNA) 2008 in Africa, and on TABLO quasi-accounting models, economic forecasting tools which are the natural complement to the ERETES software used to produce the national accounts.

News in brief describes all international cooperation actions carried out by INSEE in 2014, which completes this edition of the newsletter. Enjoy reading it!

Short-term indicators: actions in 2014 with pilot countries in sub-Saharan Africa and the Maghreb

Because they are used in the preparation of national accounts and in monitoring the economic outlook, short-term indicators have been considered a priority for several years by the national statistical institutes, especially NSIs in sub-Saharan Africa.

Like all NSIs, they hope to incorporate international recommendations on the production of short-term indicators, which could have important consequences for the way they produce these indices. This was the context for some useful cooperation between INSEE and African NSIs on this topic in 2014. Carried out jointly with Afristat, it took the form of assignments in two pilot countries, Burkina Faso and Senegal, and a seminar organised in France.

The Burkina Faso NSI, with no experience of business statistics

Support for Burkina Faso dates back to 2012, when the methodology for indices of industrial production and import prices (IPPI) was set up.

With the national statistical and demography institute (INSD), which had little experience in this area, a large number of subjects had been tackled during this first joint mission by two experts from INSEE, one of whom was an engineer-interviewer, and also an expert from Afristat: collecting basic data, product sampling, definition of control series, type of price collected, weighting, calculating indices, index aggregation, production and publication calendar, robustness of calculated indices, changes in product quality, managing appearances and disappearances of products in index calculations.

Moving from theory to practice, the first visits to companies were intended to demonstrate the engineer-interviewers' working methods and define control products.

The troubled political and social situation in the capital, Ouagadougou, added to the difficulties encountered by the INSD in providing means and resources, and resulted in the statisticians interrupting for a while the work schedule that had been put in place.

Support from Afristat meant that the process could be revived at the end of 2013, and a new joint assignment was proposed in April 2014. This involved validating the work already carried out, especially product collection, and suggesting a model for calculating the IPPI.

The application put in place was able to detect those control products for which the monthly change in price is so great as to be barely plausible, and to prioritise the checking of these results by statisticians according to the size of the change.

Missing prices can also be estimated and the IPPIs calculated for each item in the official common nomenclature used by the Afristat Member States (NAEMA) at a detailed level. The INSD is continuing to collect data, and aims to publish this index in 2015.

The Senegal NSI, more experienced in business statistics

Senegal is one of the first countries in the region to have brought out producer price indices. Strengthened by the process of tertiarisation that the economy has undergone over more than a decade, with 50% of Senegal's value added now coming from the tertiary sector, the country is currently experimenting with calculating a services producer price index

(IPPS) via the National Statistics and Demographics Agency (ANSD).

As in Burkina, the project was started in 2012 and supported by a joint Afristat-INSEE technical mission. The proposed methodology aimed to provide a structured description of the products and services identified, and consisted in establishing first of all a classification of service enterprises by activity branch according to the nomenclature (NAEMA), and interviewing some of those that were considered to be the most representative.

The project received some funding in 2014, which enabled ANSD to move forward in producing data collection tools and thus complete the sampling process. The mission carried out in June 2014 by the former head of the department for services producer price indices at INSEE involved training the data collection agents newly recruited by ANSD.

It also identified a strategy for coping with any problems encountered, especially non-response by companies. Bearing in mind the limited resources available, publication of a services producer price index is planned for 2015.

Seminars: training theory and shared experiences

Two seminars on short-term indicators were organised at the INSEE training centre in Libourne (France). They helped to redefine theoretical and practical frameworks, drawing each time on the skills of a dozen experts from the Business Statistics Directorate and one from the Directorate of the Treasury.



Seminar on short-term indicators co-organised by INSEE and AFRISTAT in Libourne

The programme had been very successful in 2013, and so at the request of Afristat, it was repeated in 2014.

Aimed at French-speaking statisticians from sub-Saharan African countries, the 2014 seminar brought together 26 participants from the 12 Member States of Afristat, and also included Haiti, another French-speaking country for which INSEE provides technical support.

The countries were represented by managers involved in the production of short-term indicators in different institutions (national statistical institutes, economic institutes, central banks).

INSEE presented the French experience of producing short-term activity indicators in compliance with international recommendations.

The main indicators (IPPI, IPPSE, ICA, IPPAP, and the BT and TP indices) were covered, and also changes that are being implemented as a result of new international recommendations.

By incorporating economic indicators for national accounts, and using them for a macroeconomic diagnosis and short-term forecasts, it was possible

to go beyond the index-producing process to provide a broader view of the subject.

During the seminar, several countries gave more detailed presentations of their own experiences (Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea and Senegal).

Collecting information from other administrations and from companies remains one of the main difficulties that these countries encounter.

The Afristat expert concluded the sessions by transposing these issues to the countries of sub-Saharan Africa, taking into account these difficulties and also specific regional differences. Participants found the presentation on the company visit (job of engineer-interviewer) particularly interesting.

The main aim of the seminar was to strengthen the capabilities of the statisticians in terms of producing short-term activity indicators.

However, two further aims were added: ensuring that participants were aware of the importance of international recommendations, and boosting the network of statisticians responsible for the statistical production of short-term activity indicators.

At the summing up, a large proportion of participants stressed that they had found the subjects interesting and that their expectations had been fully satisfied. There was a wealth of experiences shared.

NSIs in the Maghreb: new collaboration channels for producer price indices

Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia have already used several types of short-term activity indicators (IPI, IPP by sector). Note that Morocco has developed producer price indices over about fifteen years, and cooperated with Senegal to pass on this know-how.

However, the Maghreb countries do not yet produce price indices on imports and exports, and therefore their request to INSEE related particularly to the predecessors of these indicators: unit value indices derived from customs files.

A visit organised in December 2014 gave them an idea of the possibilities of support from INSEE in the medium term in this area related to producer price indices.

► *Constance Torelli*

Short-term indicators: thirteen actions in 2014 with Eastern European countries and the CIS, all with different expectations

In 2014, INSEE organised thirteen cooperation actions related to short-term indicators with countries in Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS, ex-USSR). These actions were organised by the Department of Short-term Statistics (DSCT), part of the Business Statistics Directorate, with support in one instance from the National Business Statistics Service (SSNE) in Caen.

Four countries were concerned, with several types of funding and different expectations

These cooperation actions were carried out with Croatia¹, Macedonia², Ukraine³ and Kazakhstan⁴.

The first three countries, Croatia, Macedonia and Ukraine, shared a common concern, that of complying with European regulations, and our intervention was therefore more operational and produced concrete results. Kazakhstan, on the other hand, is more at the stage of an observational approach.

Croatia: services and construction producer price indices

In Croatia, three INSEE experts carried out missions as part of a European contract to help modernise the business statistics system. The INSEE missions covered producer price indices for services and construction.

Concerning the services producer price indices, the CBS chose to approach this indicator as something new by setting up an autonomous application.

This NSI already carries out a survey of the sale price of new apartments which is similar to the sale of new dwellings survey (ECLN) by the SOeS, the observation and statistical department of the French Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy. The mission covered the present and future response to be made to Appendix B "Construction" in the European regulation on short-term statistics (STS). It also covered producer cost indices for construction, the preparation of a possible hedonic producer price index for the construction of residential buildings, and designing a price index for maintenance and improvement of existing dwellings.

Macedonia: price indices for imports and exported production in industry

In Macedonia, technical support from the three INSEE experts covered price indices for industrial production, and more specifically an extension of their system for price indices for imports and exported production.

First of all, the aim was to provide expertise in dealing with the results obtained after setting up two pilot surveys (import price / exported production price), to resolve any problems arising from this survey and to make any necessary adjustments to the questionnaire, the weighting and any other processing in preparation for the actual surveys.

The INSEE experts also helped their Macedonian counterparts to take into account industrial services within industry.

Next, it was important to ensure that what had been achieved was sustainable by bringing in improvements to the applications that had been put in place for processing the traditional survey and pilot survey results, and to explore possible changes (and the associated risks) in the years to come.

Ukraine: producer price indices in industry and construction

The first issue was to draw up an initial inventory of the methodology put in place by the SSSU to produce their producer price indices, then to consider, in consultation with the Ukrainian experts, the different possible methods of separating "domestic market" and "foreign markets" in their traditional questionnaire, and to ensure that they were able to benefit from INSEE's experience concerning questions linked with industrial services producer price indices.

Next it was considered useful to explain the "NRME" framework for short-term indicator metadata, on the one hand as required by Eurostat, and on the other as it will have to evolve to incorporate all aspects of a quality ratio (Eurostat's "SIMS" project, currently in preparation).

It was with this aim in mind that producer price indices in industry and construction were analysed. Technical discussions were fairly intensive on the calculation of weighting from structural sources (production, customs) and not always in perfect harmony.

¹ The Croatian NSI, located in Zagreb, is called the CBS, Croatian Bureau of Statistics.

² The Macedonian NSI, located in Skopje, is called the SSO, State Statistical Office.

³ The Ukrainian NSI, located in Kiev, is called the SSSU, State Statistical Service of Ukraine.

⁴ The Kazakh NSI, located in Astana, is called the CS, Committee on Statistics.

A study visit was also organised in Paris for a Ukrainian delegation to work with experts from the DSCT on many different matters, such as drawing samples and weighting, dissemination, processing food product data, construction, the work of engineer-interviewers and of agents at the SSNE (full day visit to Caen).

Kazakhstan: industrial production index

This cooperation action was part of a twinning arrangement funded by the World Bank for a 5-year period, which started in 2012 and which is being coordinated by DESTATIS.

Kazakh statisticians hoped to obtain maximum information on the industrial production index (IPI), covering both the description of the operational production process and also a presentation at each stage of the chosen methodology.

The visit lasted four days, including three at the INSEE Head Office in Paris and one day at the SSNE in Caen.

Concerning the IPI, all the steps were described: the Annual Production Survey (EAP), which forms the basis for investigation in the Monthly sector surveys (EMB), the EMB themselves, with particular focus on monitored variables, processing responses, calculating indices, analysis, deseasonalisation, the dissemination calendar and rebasing.

The French experts also brought up the question of producer price indices in industry (used as deflators, when invoicing is the monitoring variable), also the turnover index, especially in industry, to deal with cases where an administrative source is used and not data derived from a survey.

The Kazakh statisticians, who were already very familiar with these topics (except perhaps the producer price indices), wanted to see how they could improve their own statistical production.

► *Serge Darriné*



Building that is home to the Kazakh NSI, the Committee on Statistics, in Astana

INSEE's involvement in implementing SNA 2008 in Africa

An African project to implement the System of National Accounting (SNA) 2008 was officially launched in January 2014. It brings together regional organisations such as the African Development Bank, the African Union Commission and the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), as well as development partners, including Paris21.¹ The aim is to support African countries in a joint and coordinated approach to implementing SNA 2008.

A steering committee was appointed, including notably the aforementioned regional organisations and the NSI of some African countries, to oversee the project for the whole continent.

INSEE is the only NSI from outside Africa that is a member of this steering committee, mainly because of its close involvement in the development of African statistics, and particularly in the national accounts.

Within this body, our Institute is able to share its experience in terms of mobilising human and technical resources. INSEE is also pushing the need to strengthen the expertise of the African NSIs over the long term, through skill transfer and training.

At the opening meeting of the steering committee, held at the end of 2013 in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), one session was devoted to the implementation of SNA 2008. Next, during the operational phase, two experts from INSEE made several contributions to the AGNA² in 2014, which was the technical part of the project to implement SNA 2008.

In the working groups, contributions by INSEE mainly dealt with promoting the use of the ERETES software as a shared tool for preparing the national accounts in Africa, a means of ensuring harmonisation in the different methods of preparing the accounts.

ERETES is currently used by about twenty countries in French-speaking Africa, but it is still used very little in countries in the English-speaking part. INSEE declared its willingness to provide technical support for these countries if they showed an interest in adopting this software.

Thus our Institute participated in the first training workshop on implementing SNA 2008 and on using the ERETES software for the benefit of the English-speaking countries. This workshop was organised jointly by UNECA and Eurostat, and took place in Nouakchott (Mauritania) from 21 to 23 January 2014.

An expert from INSEE also joined the technical workshop that looked at recommendations and methods of preparing a resources-uses table (see following article).

► *Jean-Samy Aziz*

¹ The Statistical Partnership in the Service of Development for the 21st century (Paris21) was created in November 1999 by the United Nations, the European Commission, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in response to the resolution by the UN Economic and Social Council on the UN Conference Sustainable Development goals.

² AGNA African group of national accounts.

Workshop-meeting for experts on resources-uses tables in Africa

From 2 to 6 June 2014 in Port-Louis (Mauritius), an expert from INSEE took part in a meeting of 27 African experts in national accounting from both English-speaking and French-speaking countries. This workshop was the second of its kind, in the framework of establishing good accounting practice for the implementation of the System of National Accounting (SNA) 2008.

The task that these experts had been set: to approve the text of a technical manual on good practice for preparing the resources-uses table in Africa. This manual is the result of an initiative by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA).¹

There were lively debates and INSEE was able to contribute in several ways.

From a technical point of view, INSEE supported the proposal by the French-speaking countries who believed that at the stage that it had reached, the manual was not representative of all practices in countries within the continent.

There were two coexisting trains of thought concerning the writing, in fact.

¹ The ECA, which is dependent on the United Nations, is a member of the steering committee for the African continent.

One considered that the resources-uses table needed to be prepared only infrequently, and the other, which was more cumbersome and costly, suggested a resources-uses table should be produced every year. SNA 2008 recommends producing annual resources-uses tables, both in value and in volume, because when they have been produced, the quality of estimates is better. The annual tables are not imposed, however, as in practice the availability of data and the organisation of the country's statistical system can make preparation difficult. These discussions were essential, because harmonisation of the concepts and methods between African accountants is a key step in preparation for implementation of the SNA across the continent.

INSEE also had to counter a few misconceptions about the ERETES tool on the part of some English-speaking accountants, who believed that ERETES would not be suitable for the accounting style in English-speaking countries: in fact, this tool does not impose a single method for preparing resources-uses tables. The tool uses a common base which can be applied to all users, and can, on the contrary, adapt to the specifications provided by the accountants, to be used whatever accounting method is being applied. Because of this common core, the use of ERETES by the countries that are not using it at present would contribute to the harmonisation that the ECA is hoping to achieve.

production of a good practice manual, which was begun a few months earlier, and has in fact already contributed to it on the invitation of the ECA, by writing the text of a box on "The importance of the resources-uses table in the SNA", a chapter on "Useful tools for preparing the annual national accounts used in Africa" and an addition to chapter 7 of the manual "Some sectors with problems of measurement", entitled "Estimating the informal sector with the ERETES tool".

To conclude, it was decided to postpone the publication date of the manual so that many of the recommendations put forward by the participants could be included.

More generally, INSEE supports the

► *Jean Louis*

² In paragraph 15.110 (the equivalent in SNA 2010 is paragraph 9.14).

Socio-economic impacts of the earthquake in Haiti: taking stock 5 years on

The study entitled "Change in living conditions in Haiti between 2010 and 2012 – The social response to the earthquake" (L'évolution des conditions de vie en Haïti entre 2010 et 2012 - La réplique sociale du séisme), published in 2014, provides an evaluation of the impact of the catastrophe at national level and of the responses that it provoked from institutions and individuals.

The work was carried out at the end of 2012 by the Haitian Institute of Statistics and Computer Studies (IHSI) with support from the DIAL Joint Research Unit (IRD and University Paris Dauphine), INSEE and the World Bank on a sample of 5,000 households that were representative of the total population (see the report on Haiti in the International Technical Support newsletter no.3, June 2014).

► *Constance Torelli*



L'évolution des conditions de vie en Haïti entre 2007 et 2012

La réplique sociale du séisme



TABLO models, a natural complement to the ERETES software

TABLO models provide recent information or forecasts on the economy of a country in line with the concepts of national accounting, aimed at institutional and private decision-makers. Designed in the 1980s,¹ these tools are macroeconomic models known as quasi-accounting models, and are particularly useful for countries that have not built up long series of economic data, or which perhaps have only a single year of national accounting (see Box “Background to these tools”).

What these models permit

When the necessary programming modifications have been applied, four major types of work are possible with TABLO models:

- Used in its conventional form, the TABLO model can produce forecasting: exploratory short-term projection of changes in the economy for the current year, years N+1 and N+2, consistent with past series of accounts, based on hypotheses on the country's economy and budgetary policy and on the international environment; in this case, TABLO is the ideal tool for studying variants according to political decisions or climate hazards (year of agricultural drought or abundance).

- A second TABLO model can be used to produce rapid accounts, as it can be useful to draw up provisional accounts pending the definitive accounts produced with ERETES (for which a critical mass of information is required); the model should then incorporate all available short-term results, and even arbitrate for apparent contradictions according to their degree of precision.

- A third model can be used to carry out interpolations in order to fill in gaps in past series of accounts; this means estimating accounts interpolated between two non-consecutive traditional accounts T

and T+n (due to data being unavailable or gaps to be filled). The model advances from one of the accounts, to arrive ultimately at the target account. It starts from the more recent account and moves towards the older account.

- Finally, a fourth model, probably the most complex, models the current year. Drawing up projected accounts for the current year is the trickiest operation of all as at the beginning of the year it resembles an exploratory approach and over the course of the year gradually gets closer to the procedure for provisional accounts. There has to be an imperceptible transition from a theoretical estimate of the economy based on predefined hypotheses to an observation of realities described in short-term indicators of greater and greater precision.

The data required

The data needed in order to use the TABLO models derive from the resources-uses table, the integrated economic accounts table and the available short-term indicators.

For this, the model requires a complete Resources-Uses table, all source information from the national accounting available at moment T or, if not, data that can offset the absence of this data, such as demographic growth, used to approximate change in essential household consumption, as opposed to that for pleasure.

Who uses them? Cooperation actions by the International Technical Cooperation Section

Afristat recommends that African countries use TABLO models for preparing rapid accounts, complementing the national accounts software ERETES, which is used for the definitive accounts

and for economic forecasting. User countries are currently the following: Mauritania, Mali, Togo and Ivory Coast. All these countries are also simultaneously users of ERETES as a complementary tool.

The Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC) also uses TABLO models to prepare forecasts in each country in the community, and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) intends to do the same for its countries.

These models are also used by the programme Rapid Economic Accounts for Overseas Regions (CEROM) to produce early accounts, N-1 to N, for the three French departments in America (Guadeloupe, Guyana, Martinique), and also in New Caledonia, French Polynesia and Reunion Island.

The International Technical Cooperation Section supported the administrations of Mauritania, Mali and Togo in interpolating their respective national accounts. It assisted the Statistical Institute of French Polynesia in obtaining rapid accounts for 2011 to 2014 and supported the Antilles-Guyana Interregional Directorate (DIRAG) in obtaining rapid economic accounts for Guadeloupe, Martinique and Guyana.

Advantages and disadvantages

The advantages and disadvantages of using these models are as follows:

- Advantages: compatibility of TABLO models with ERETES, quick estimates, good results for estimating GDP;

- Disadvantages: any structural modifications to the economy over time are not taken into account (these models must therefore only be used for the very short term), and results are not very robust for the most detailed economic aggregates.

¹ By Daniel Tommasi, Jean-Joël Aerts, Blaise Leenhardt and Gaston Olive, whose initials underlined opposite form the acronym TABLO.

Box – Background to these tools

The family of TABLO models is an extension of the work by V. Leontief. On the basis of a table of Interindustry Exchanges, his goal was to measure the diffusion throughout the entire economy of a variation in final demand (e.g. public expenditure) or an inflationary shock (e.g. an oil crisis). The first models that were produced were known as “Input / Output” models and they assumed that interindustry exchanges are reversible, which is not always the case.

Progress in computing power enabled the designers of the TABLO models to circumvent the inversion of the matrix by using an iterative calculation, a relatively simple operation to carry out using a spreadsheet. This new procedure had the advantage of being able to roll out the method:

- to non-square matrices with n branches and p products, where the Input / Output model uses an Input-Output Table² which is necessarily symmetric to n branches and n products;
- to branches where production is not linked solely to demand (agricultural production, mines, non-market services, etc.);
- to simulating more complex behaviour (gains or losses of market shares as a function of deviations from estimated prices, etc.);
- and to a simultaneous and interactive estimate of volumes and prices.

² The symmetric IOT is an adaptation of the Resources-Uses Table. The Resources-Uses Table is not necessarily symmetric and always defines margins and taxes as elements of transition from the basic price to the acquisition price; it is estimated at the acquisition price, whereas the symmetric IOT is estimated at the basic price.

Ultimately, the TABLO model is dependent on the statistical system in which it is established, on the quality of the definitive national accounts, and the modeller’s knowledge of the economy to be estimated.

It takes a long time to produce a model, but this can be profitable if one considers that the same model is good for the duration of the base used for the national accounts, and this generally lasts between 5 and 10 years.

► *Christian Girier*

Report on the twinning with Macedonia

The twinning with Macedonia, in which INSEE took part, was completed in 2014. This twinning was funded by the European Union, and directed by DESTATIS (Germany). In addition to INSEE, Statistics Denmark and the NSIs of Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria also contributed.

The topics that had to be covered in the context of the twinning were national accounts, sectoral statistics, strengthening institutional capacities and the preparation of calls for tender.

INSEE intervened more specifically in the following areas: sustainable development indicators (with the

French Ministry of Ecology, Energy, Sustainable Development and the Sea - MEEDDM), foreign trade price indices, geographic information systems and tools for transmitting information to Eurostat. Nine actions were completed over the two years of the project.

► *Dominique Francoz*

2014 news in brief on Europe and Asia

Croatia

PPI for services and construction

In March, two INSEE experts conducted a mission to Croatia as part of a European contract to help modernise the Croatian business statistics system (see the report on this subject in this issue). One of them worked on the price indices for production of services, the other on producer price indices in the field of construction. In April, the first of two experts conducted a second mission on the same subject as before.

Macedonia

Sustainable development indicators

In January, two French experts, one from INSEE, the other from the French Ministry of Sustainable Development, conducted a mission as part of the twinning with Macedonia, directed by Destatis. Issues relating to sustainable development indicators were addressed, along with related strategies.

PPI

In February, also as part of this twinning, two INSEE experts conducted a mission on the theme of producer price indices. The aim of this action was to provide expertise on the results subsequent to the set-up of the pilot survey, to solve problems highlighted by the survey and to adjust the questionnaire accordingly, as well as the weights and treatments ahead of the actual surveys. In May a final mission on this theme was carried out by two French experts to sustain the achievements of previous missions: concrete improvements to the application implemented for processing the results of the pilot survey, and initiation of a reflection on possible changes (and associated risks) for the coming years.

Serbia

SILC survey

After carrying out a first wave of SILC surveys (the European equivalent of the SRCV, the French statistical survey on resources and living conditions) in 2013, for the second wave to be launched in May 2014, the the Serbian NSI SORS wanted to use computer-assisted data collection (CATI) for the first time. A visit by a Serbian delegation therefore took place in March 2014 on this theme, for both the IT and organisational aspects. At the end of this visit, substantial documentation was sent to the Serbian statisticians.

Regional statistics

In October, an expert from the Nord - Pas-de-Calais regional directorate conducted a mission to SORS, aimed at contributing to a better understanding of local data dissemination methods with a view to strengthening communications with public statistics users. Several aspects of INSEE's local dissemination strategy were presented. The mission resulted in numerous recommendations.

Tourism statistics

In November, a Serbian delegation conducted a study visit to INSEE on the subject of tourism statistics. The aim was to give this delegation an overview of tourism statistics in France, especially regarding demand for accommodation, future methods envisioned, and the work done on this subject at the Directorate-General for Enterprises.

Groups and profiling of enterprises

In December, a Serbian delegation conducted a study visit to INSEE on the subject of groups and profiling of enterprises. The aim of this visit was to present the work carried out by the Business Statistics Directorate on the subject of structural statistics (Sirene and Sirus directories, Lifi and Recme, Esane and Inward Fats surveys) and French and European profiling.



Study visit on tourist statistics: the Serbian delegation (SORS) and the two French experts, Fabrice Hillaireau (DGE) and Florent Favre (INSEE), first and third from the right, respectively. Serbian experts, from left to right: Petar Tančić, Danijela Mladenović, Boško Trmčić and Miroslav Cucurević

Ukraine

Classifications

In January, an INSEE expert carried out a mission to improve the Ukrainian system for determining the principal activity code of enterprises, as well as residual classifications problems. This mission within the framework of European twinning was conducted with Ukraine and led by Statistics Denmark. It took place as part of ongoing bilateral cooperation conducted by INSEE with the SSSU, in the field of business statistics.

CPI, PPI and business registers

Again within the framework of this twinning, three INSEE experts went to Kiev in March: the first expert assessed the Ukrainian consumer price index methodology (particularly on issues relating to sampling and the inclusion of quality); the second made an initial assessment of the methodology used by the SSSU to generate the producer price index; and the third familiarised himself with the Ukrainian system of business registers and issued a first set of recommendations to prepare for the recoding of Ukrainian enterprises.

On issues relating to producer price indices for services, an additional mission was conducted in the wake of the first, this time funded by INSEE's bilateral cooperation budget, to enable the SSSU to benefit from INSEE's experience.

National accounts

In April, two INSEE experts conducted a mission to Ukraine to work on the theme of national accounting, and more particularly on issues related to the merging of the Ukrainian national accounts system with the 2010 ESA standard, the release of accounts and quality control, as well as issues arising from the attachment of the Crimea to Russia.

Business registers

In June, the INSEE expert who visited Kiev on the topic of business registers continued the work started, in particular to obtain detailed information on sources of data on the financial links between Ukrainian legal units.



INSEE expert Alain Gallais (under the Ukrainian flag) speaking to his Ukrainian counterparts during a mission to Kiev on producer price indices

PPI

In October, an expert undertook a mission on producer price indices, with the main objective of clarifying the "NRME" framework of short-term indicator metadata, firstly as required by Eurostat, secondly as it is expected to evolve to integrate all the dimensions of a quality report (Eurostat "SIMS" project, still in preparation). This mission was also an opportunity to draw up a progress report on the Ukrainian project to separate producer price indices between "domestic" and

"foreign markets", from the perspective of weightings and aggregation techniques.

National accounts

In November, a Ukrainian delegation consisting of 4 people conducted a study visit to INSEE and the Banque de France on the theme of national accounts, particularly the financial accounts. The objective of this visit, which came further to a mission to Ukraine by two French experts in April, was to address the following points: financial accounts, FISIM imports and exports, calculation of production for own final use, merchanting, production of non-life insurance, and government accounts.

Kazakhstan

Energy statistics

In October, a Kazakh delegation conducted a study visit to the SOeS with the aim of fact-finding about the work done on energy statistics, especially in the oil and gas industry: production and consumption surveys, exploitation of administrative sources, dissemination of data and publications on this topic.

Investment statistics

In November, another Kazakh delegation conducted a study visit to INSEE on the topic of investment statistics. The aim of the visit was to present a comprehensive overview of different work done on investment at the Business Statistics Directorate (structural statistics and thematic surveys) and the Economic Studies and National Accounts Directorate (national accounts, short-term statistics and macroeconomic studies).

Russia

Classifications

In March, Rosstat, the Russian NSI, received support in the field of classifications in order to launch a major project to migrate the existing data towards the European standards currently in force (NACE Rev. 2). The INSEE expert who conducted the mission precisely defined the challenges and risks of

the project and listed the problems existing in the Russian classification (fishing for scientific purposes treated as fishing for commercial purposes, etc.).



Study visit on energy statistics: the Kazakh delegation, the French experts, including Céline Rouquette, deputy director of energy statistics (bottom right) and the organiser of this visit, Volker Gutekunst, for the international cooperation department of DESTATIS (top right)

2014 News in brief on the Mediterranean Basin

Morocco

National accounts

In March, two INSEE experts conducted a technical assistance mission to the official statistics body in Morocco, the Haut Commissariat au Plan (HCP) on the finalisation of the 2007-base accounts and preparation of the series that will succeed them. This should be consistent with the 2008 SNA specifications.

Foreign companies setting up in Morocco

In April an INSEE expert conducted a mission to assess available information sources on flows of foreign investment. These discussions continued in May on the occasion of a visit of a delegation from the Office to INSEE and again in November during a mission in Rabat.

Survey on trade in services

The set-up of a survey on trade in services was initiated during the twinning with the Office des Changes (Currency Office) in Morocco. A mission by INSEE experts in April led to a review of the concepts, methods, draft questionnaires and instructions for interviewers.

A second mission took place at the Office des Changes in October. It consisted in the analysis of tests conducted and resulted in the adaptation of the template pilot survey questionnaire, the finalisation of the classification of services and instructions for the survey, and finally in discussions on the standard to be used for the selection of units to be surveyed.

Processing of time series

Between 9 and 13 June, an INSEE expert led a one-week training course organised by the Office des Changes on the industrialisation of time series processing.

Statisticians from other Moroccan authorities, including the Haut Commissariat au Plan, were invited to this workshop.

Sampling designs

In September, an INSEE expert conducted a mission with the Moroccan Ministry of Industry, Trade and New Technologies. This mission led to practical implementation of sample design optimisation methods using different Ministry databases, in line with theoretical presentations made last year.

Business surveys

In November, a joint visit was organised for two Moroccan delegations, the first from the Haut Commissariat au Plan and the second from the Ministry of Industry, Trade and New Technologies. The main theme of the visit was online collection of business surveys. Sales outlet, networks and network boundary surveys were also presented, financial links were observed, and the ICT sector was also included (classifications - activities of the Digital Observatory).

Algeria

Business tendency surveys

In May, INSEE and the Banque de France received a visit from a delegation from the National Office of Statistics (ONS) on business tendency surveys. The French experts presented the methodology used in France and took part in a discussion on current ways of thinking at the ONS to improve the quality of Algerian surveys.

National accounts

Two INSEE experts visited the ONS in June. The mission schedule included discussions on the work underway, including analysis of the 2001 base and the decisions required to finalise it.

ERETES

In October, an INSEE expert conducted a mission to the ONS with the main objective of completely finalising the 2001 base year. Furthermore, the aim was to start loading data from the current year and to raise awareness of ERETES tools specific to current years.

Tunisia

Visit by Mr Hédi Saïdi, Director-General of the National Institute of Statistics

In June, INSEE received a visit by Mr Hedi Saïdi, Director-General of the National Institute of Statistics in Tunisia. The visit was focused on interviews with the heads of various components of the INSEE in-house training system, statistical coordination, methodology and with the management team of the Regional Directorate of Aquitaine. In addition, it included a meeting with the Director-General of INSEE. After the visit, the desire to continue and strengthen the existing cooperation relations that have long been in place between INSEE and the INS was reaffirmed by both parties.

SICORE

In August, an INSEE expert conducted a mission to the NSI in Tunisia to give a detailed presentation of the training component of the SICORE automatic coding tool (classifications used, operation of the coding and manual use). He proposed a roadmap for the INS to adapt this tool to the Tunisian context.

Family budget and living conditions

A visit was organised in December for the managers of the household consumption survey of the national statistics institute in Tunisia.

During this visit they were given presentations of the INSEE family budget survey and the SRCV and to talk with their French counterparts about the issues raised by their survey (sampling, collection, processing).

Maghreb

Regional workshop on the main changes introduced into the accounts by the ESA 2010 standard

This workshop, held in February at the INSEE premises, was attended by delegations from the three NSI in the Maghreb. The programme as decided upon with these institutes focused on the organisational system set up by INSEE to adapt the French national accounts to the new standard and to the changes that make the greatest impact on the measurement of GDP.

Quarterly accounts workshop

The workshop was held in June within the framework of the remote support system put in place in autumn 2013 by the INSEE Quarterly Accounts department. The programme, developed in consultation with the relevant teams of the NSI, involved organising data, calibration, specific problems of the Muslim calendar for the correction for seasonal variations, smoothing, balancing the accounts, and chaining-unchaining.

Visit to the Metz IT Office

The ONS in Algeria and the INS in Tunisia are considering restructuring their computing centres. The two institutes wanted to study the solutions implemented in the new National IT Office created by INSEE in Metz. Discussions organised in June with INSEE managers also allowed a deeper examination of the visit in 2013 on operation, security, organisation (strategy, processes, management) and technical issues (infrastructure, hardware, applications).

National accounts

Delegations from the three

Maghreb countries, Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, were invited in November to take part in the French National Accounting Association (ACN) conference. Before the conference, a visit was organised with a presentation of new themes in addition to the workshop held in February 2014 and to give an update on INSEE's support for these NSIs, firstly for quarterly accounts and secondly for annual accounts using ERETES.

Studies on inequalities and insecurity

In December, a joint visit was organised for delegations from the Observatory of Living Conditions in Morocco (Haut Commissariat au Plan) and the Algerian ONS. During this visit an overview of study activities in France on issues of inequality and insecurity was presented at INSEE, ministerial statistical departments and several research organisations (DIAL, INED, CREDOC). A meeting at the Economic, Social and Environmental Council illustrated how civil society seizes upon these themes based on what is produced by the official statistical system.

Short-term indicators

Also in December, a visit was organised for delegations from the three Maghreb countries, Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, on the subject of short-term indicators to present the French experience of producer price indices in different economic sectors as well as in the industrial production index.

Lebanon

European twinning, Lebanon Ministry of Finance - "Development of the Macroeconomics Department" component

INSEE experts conducted missions throughout the year within the framework of this twinning to improve inflation, revenue and imports forecasting tools.

Palestine

Set-up of a business register - COMPARE (Common Palestinian Register) project

France has decided to assist the Palestinian Authority in the construction of administrative business registers so that they will meet international standards in terms of comprehensiveness and quality. The project will last 24 months and may be extended to 30 months. A first mission in March 2014 resulted in validation of a first version of reference terms that will define the content and objectives of the project.

The project continued throughout 2014 and was given concrete form through the implementation of 3 missions at the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) and a visit to the INSEE by the PCBS. These different actions led to validation of the methodological approach and allowed participants to get to the heart of the matter. Work was carried out on different information sources, in particular a detailed study conducted into the identification variables of establishments / enterprises. The support focused on specifications and optimization of this information before carrying out a first test to match data sources.

Mediterranean Euro-Mediterranean Forum

INSEE participated in the third meeting of the Forum of Euro-Mediterranean statisticians held in Luxembourg on 13 and 14 May.

Discussions focused mainly on the adoption of a Statistics Code of Practice for neighbouring countries in southern Europe, based on the European code and the work programmes and future activities of the seven themed working groups.

The EuropAid representative also confirmed that the European Commission would set up a new €5 million regional support programme for the period 2015-2018.

2014 News in brief on Sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean

Afristat

Short-term outlook - Forecasting

March and December - An INSEE expert took part in the half-yearly short-term outlook seminars organised in Burkina Faso and Cameroon by Afristat, UEMOA and CEMAC (see article on this subject published in newsletter no. 2 of December 2013). In the type of economic analysis presented for the occasion, regional dynamics and national specifics were especially highlighted.

Quality procedures

In May, INSEE supported Afristat in the organisation of quality assurance induction training in Bamako (Mali) for its experts. A private consultant, who also supports managers from the INSEE Quality Unit, provided this training to a dozen Afristat managers.

National accounts

In June, two INSEE experts, one in national accounts, the other in editorial techniques applied to statistical texts, took part in the seminar organised by the regional agency of the IMF, Afritac-Ouest, in Lomé (Togo). Some fifty representatives from ten countries in the region, Afristat and sub-regional organisations (BCEAO, UEMOA) met for an update on preparations for the transition to SNA 2008. An action plan for the coming years was validated by all participants.

Business statistics

In July, a seminar on business statistics co-organised by Afristat and INSEE for French-speaking

statisticians from sub-Saharan African countries was held from 3 to 11 July 2014 at the INSEE training centre in Libourne (for more details see the article on this subject focusing on Africa, in the report on short-term indicators in issue number 4).

ERETES

From 13 to 17 October 2014, two experts from the International Technical Support department took part in the annual seminar of Afristat (Economic and Statistical Observatory of Sub-Saharan Africa) on National Accounting in Bamako (Mali). At this seminar, INSEE presented the impact of changes of base (ESA 2010) on its accounts and the steps taken to support countries in the field of quarterly accounts. The seminar was also an opportunity for Afristat, Afritac Centre and Afritac Ouest, UEMOA and INSEE to coordinate activities they had planned for 2014-15 in the Sub-Saharan African region.

Confidentiality of statistical data

In November, INSEE hosted several delegations (Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Tunisia) and experts from Afristat on the subject of confidentiality of statistical data and the dissemination of micro-data. INSEE's interventions focused on how the Institute addresses legal and methodological issues relating to the confidentiality of statistical data and the communication of micro-data, from dissemination on the INSEE website to the installation of a secure remote access centre.

The experiences of countries presented during the workshop enriched the discussions.

Visit of the Deputy Director-General of Afristat

During the same month, INSEE hosted the Deputy Director General of Afristat, who took part in the 15th conference of the French National Accounting Association (ACN) and held interviews with INSEE senior officials and at the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Meetings with experts from INSEE, the OECD and development economics research centres were also organised, covering progress measurement issues within the framework of the Post-2015 Agenda and policy impact assessment methods.



Study visit on confidentiality. From INSEE: Stéphane Gregoir, director of Methodology, Statistical Coordination and International Relations

Senegal

Business statistics

In June, an expert from INSEE and Afristat provided technical support to the National Agency of Statistics and Demography (ANSD) in Dakar for the set-up of a producer price index for services. Collection of data from enterprises is underway.

Methods of correction for seasonal variations

In November, two INSEE experts co-hosted training on seasonal adjustment in Dakar with the National Agency of Statistics and Demography (ANSD). The training programme presented the main methods of seasonal adjustment and JDEMETRA+ software developed under the aegis of Eurostat and the European Central Bank. A very large part of the training was devoted to practical work and the use of methods for national series, taking account for example of the particularities of the calendar (Ramadan effect). The training brought together fifteen or so managers from the ANSD from different backgrounds: short-term outlook, prices, national accounts, quarterly accounts, foreign trade, etc. The participation of an Afristat expert with regional knowledge also contributed to discussions.

Togo

Short-term outlook and forecasts

In February, an INSEE expert conducted a joint mission with an Afristat expert to Lomé on the interpolation of rapid accounts using the Tablo model (see article on this subject).

Burkina Faso

Business statistics

In April, two INSEE experts conducted a joint mission with an Afristat expert at the National Institute of Statistics and Demography (INSD) in Ouagadougou as part of a methodology implementation project for producer price indices for industry.

The data collection work led to advances in the use of data and the calculation of an index.

Ivory Coast

ERETES

From 2 to 5 December 2014, an expert visited Abidjan (Ivory Coast) to provide training on two Eretes tools to facilitate the work of Ivorian accountants when preparing a provisional account with Eretes. The classification change tool will allow the carry-over of the classification and final accounts data to the classification of the provisional account, which is generally more aggregated; and the long series tool will produce indices for long-term trends on which the Ivorian accountants can rely to analyse the credibility of that account.

Comoros

Social statistics

In May, an INSEE expert conducted a mission with an Afristat expert at the National Statistics Institute in Moroni for support in the use of Employment Survey data, the informal sector and the living conditions of Comorian households.

African continent

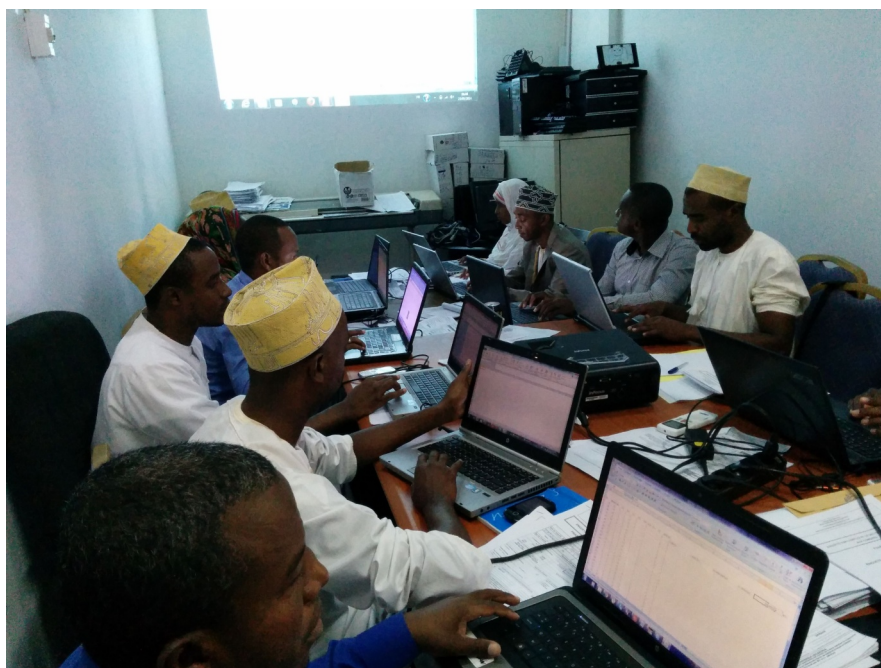
African Union and Statistical Commission for Africa

INSEE took part in the first joint session which met in Tunis in December 2014. The session gave a broad overview of the current concerns of African statisticians which fit into the wider framework of issues discussed at the Statistical Commission of the United Nations: the 2010 series of population censuses, the international Comparison Programme, governance, data revolution, the post-2015 agenda ...

Haiti

National accounts

In July, an INSEE expert conducted a mission to identify needs for a national accounts support programme with the Haitian Institute of Statistics and Computer Studies (IHSI) in Port-au-Prince.



INSEE mission in the Comoros Islands on social statistics

2014 news in brief on the ERETES tool

Training of accountants from the Reunion regional directorate

From 15 to 24 September 2014, an expert from the International Technical Support department went to Saint-Denis in Reunion to provide advanced training on the Eretes software. This was complemented by a reminder of national accounts theory, with the ultimate aim of the Reunion-Mayotte regional directorate itself being able to train newcomers to the regional accounts division, composed of 6 agents.

Training of new accountants from overseas departments and territorial collectivities

From 11 to 18 September 2014 the annual ERETES training course was held in Paris. It brought together national accountants from the INSEE regional department in Guadeloupe and the Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies in New Caledonia.

Technical Mission to Brazil

The Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics is co-owner, with INSEE and Eurostat, of the ERETES module, a support tool for producing the accounts. A meeting between a member of the ERETES technical team and the Brazil accounts team was held in Rio from 1st to 4 December 2014 for an update on the use of the tool, changes and future developments, integration of feedback from Brazil in the project, and the rewriting of the module.

Well-deserved retirements!

François Coûté

Over the last eight years at the head of the International Support Division (2006-2014), François Coûté worked tirelessly for French statistical cooperation to be recognised and developed internationally. He made a considerable contribution to validating our activities, our know-how and our tools, including the national accounting software ERETES. He was very popular among all those he worked with, both inside and outside INSEE, for his professionalism, his tact and his good listening skills; he fulfilled his very difficult mission with dynamism and tenacity. François is now happily retired, and spends his time on cycling and photography!



François Coûté, head of the INSEE International Technical Cooperation Section until 2014

Charlotte Schiltz

Charlotte Schiltz spent her entire statistical career at INSEE in the area of national accounts. Her varied career path took her to work in different departments of the Institute, and also to Senegal as a

collaborator, then to Portugal a few years later. Her experience naturally led her to join the International Technical Support department, where she worked for fifteen years as a recognised expert in national accounting and was very much in demand across five continents. In this role she also contributed to the development of the ERETES software and to its introduction in numerous countries. Everyone who worked with her appreciated her very great professionalism and her boundless energy, not forgetting the countless travel tales which she would recount with great humour. Her colleagues wish her a very happy retirement!

Stéphane Gregoir

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