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DEVELOPMENT OF TRAINING SYSTEM FOR NATIONAL STATISTICAL AGENCIES OF CIS¹ COUNTRIES

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Introduction

Problem of professional training is the urgent point for national statistical offices of CIS countries (CIS NSOs) and all offices endeavor to solve it. Unfortunately, their efforts are strongly limited by shortage of resources. So, the idea was to join forces and create the single training program for CIS statisticians to make efforts more effective. This idea was formulated by Interstate Statistical Committee of Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS Statcom, www.cisstat.com) at the beginning of 2011 and supported by The World Bank which granted CIS Statcom with necessary funds to start implementation. In its turn CIS Statcom contracted one of the leading Russian universities – National Research University Higher School of Economics (HSE, www.hse.ru) – to provide training services within project. Specially for

¹ Commonwealth of Independent States

training of CIS statisticians HSE has established International Institute for Education in Statistics (MISO, www.miso.hse.ru) which completed the chain.

At the moment this “on The World Bank Grant based” project which was actually the pilot part of more general project for development of training system for CIS NSOs is over and this paper consists of some results.

Pilot project included three main parts.

- Brief research to clarify needs of CIS NSOs in statistical training;
- Delivery of 8 sets of teaching materials for the practice-oriented statistical courses including programs, presentations, references, exercises, etc., to initiate the Statcom’s library of training courses to provide trainings for CIS NSOs in the future;
- Delivery of 4 pilot trainings for CIS NSOs staffs to polish training materials in practice.

Demand for training

The brief research to clarify training needs was conducted through the questioning of CIS NSOs using special questionnaires were sent by CIS Statcom to Russia, Ukraine, Belorussia, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kirgiz Republic, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. Unfortunately, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan did not respond.

The questionnaire was worked out by MISO’s experts and consists of three parts:

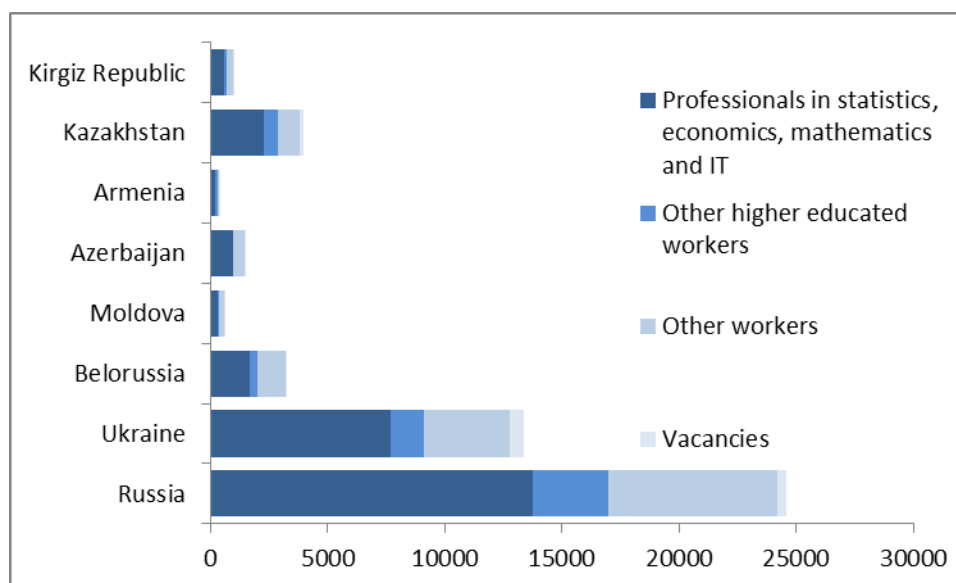
- (1) Number of NSO staffs and data on level of their professional qualifications;
- (2) Annual training data and resources available;
- (3) Training needs.

The some most interesting results of this research are following.

There is the huge number of staffs working in CIS NSOs responded to questioners (totally 47 thousands with 51% in Russia). Thus, this is more than enough to provide the massive and stable demand for training.

General level of qualification of CIS statisticians looks high. More than 70% of staffs have the diploma of higher education with even higher level of certified professionals in central offices (about 90% in average). In Kirgiz Republic, 100% of staffs, working in Central Office have the diploma of higher education, in Kazakh Statistical agency this indicator is about the same (99.5%). Perhaps, it looks strange but the lowest educational level is in Russian central office (about 80% of certified professionals).

Graph 1 Number of staffs in national statistical offices of CIS countries, workers



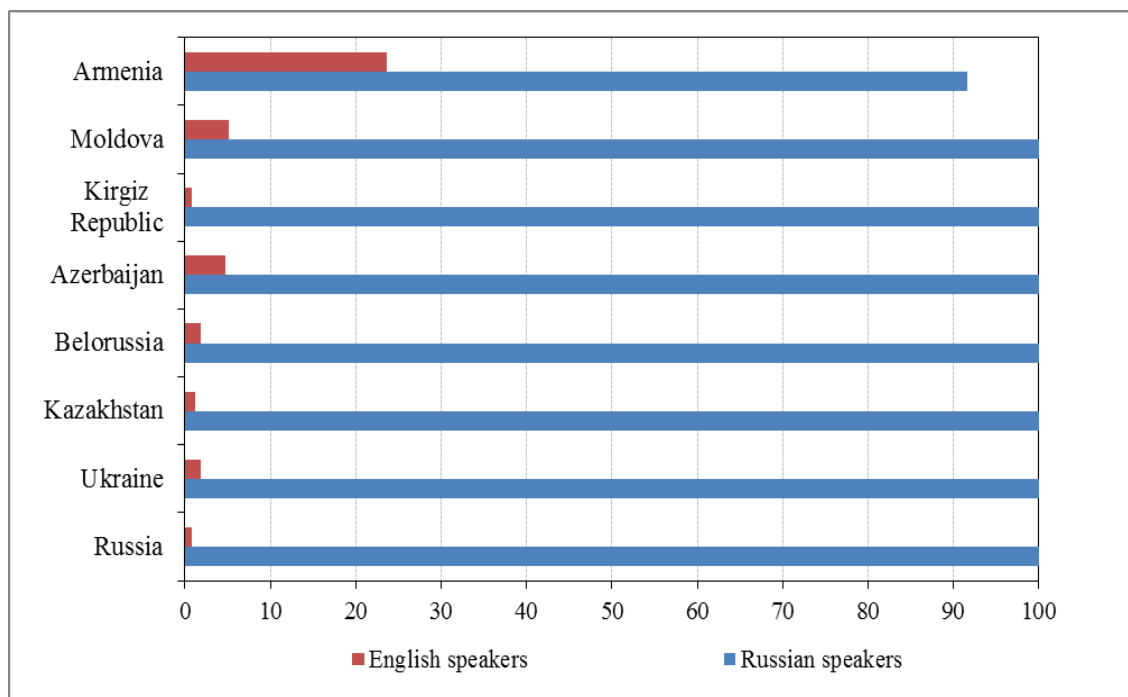
CIS statisticians are not only well educated but also very experienced. Their average working stage is about 14 years (for the central office staffs) and varies from 21 years in Azerbaijan to 7.5 years in Kazakhstan, because Kazakh statistical agency was moved to new capital (Astana) several years ago and most of aged staffs were retired.

All CIS NSOs are making efforts to provide trainings for their staffs but total number of trainees goes down from year to year. In 2007 there were more than 10 thousands trainees for all CIS NSOs (this is about 21.7% of total staffs) versus 8 thousands (17%) in 2008 and only 6.2 thousands (13%) in 2009. True, this is mostly because of Russian tendency. In most of other countries number of annually trained staffs grows up.

Only about 5% of trainees in 2009 had their courses abroad though this indicator varies significantly for different countries. In Kazakhstan, 50% of staffs had their courses abroad. In Moldova it was about 30%. In other countries this share is much lower.

For the training abroad, the most significant limitation factor beside funds is a language. Only 5% of statisticians in CIS countries speak English well enough to participate in English classes. The lowest share of English speakers is in Russia (0.6%) and the highest one is in Armenia (23/6%). In contrast, most of CIS statisticians speak Russian. With the only exception all CIS NSOs answered that 100% of staffs in their central offices speak Russian. In Armenia this share is 92%.

Graph 2 Shares of Russian speakers and English speakers among CIS statisticians (central offices), by country, (%)



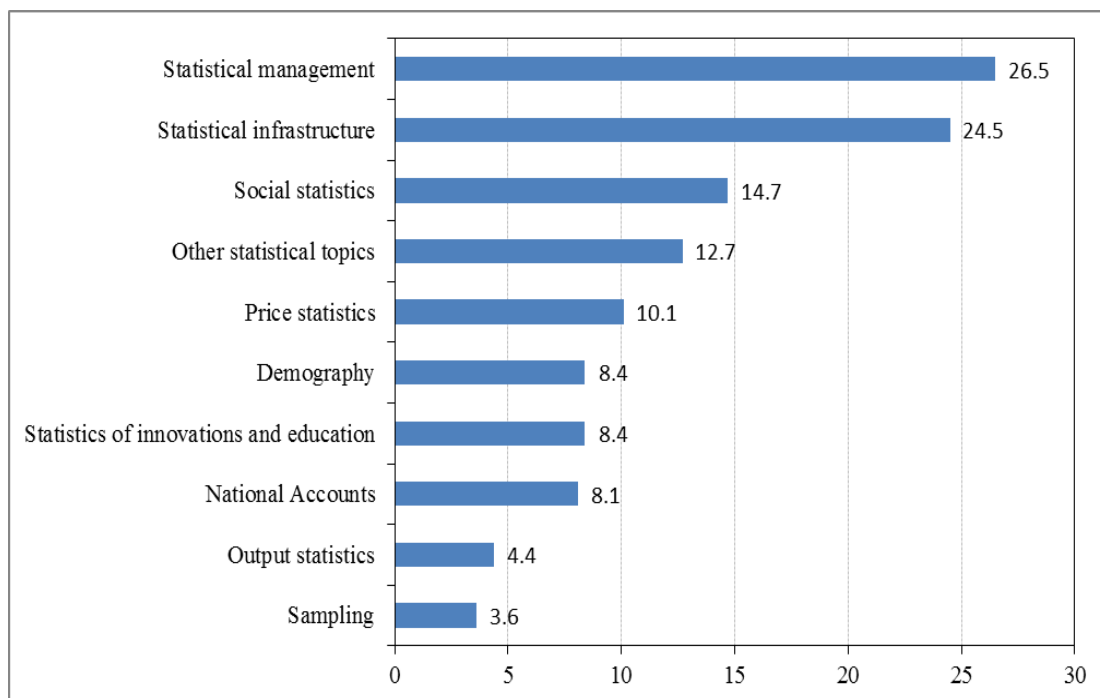
Most of trainings took place in home. Rosstat provides most of its trainings using outsourcing. Trainings were provided by Russian universities and training centers which were selected through the competition procedure. Most of courses for regional offices were provided using distant technology through the internet. The own training centers have the Ukraine, Kazakh and Kirgiz statistical agencies.

At the third place by popularity were trainings with guest trainers from abroad took place in home.

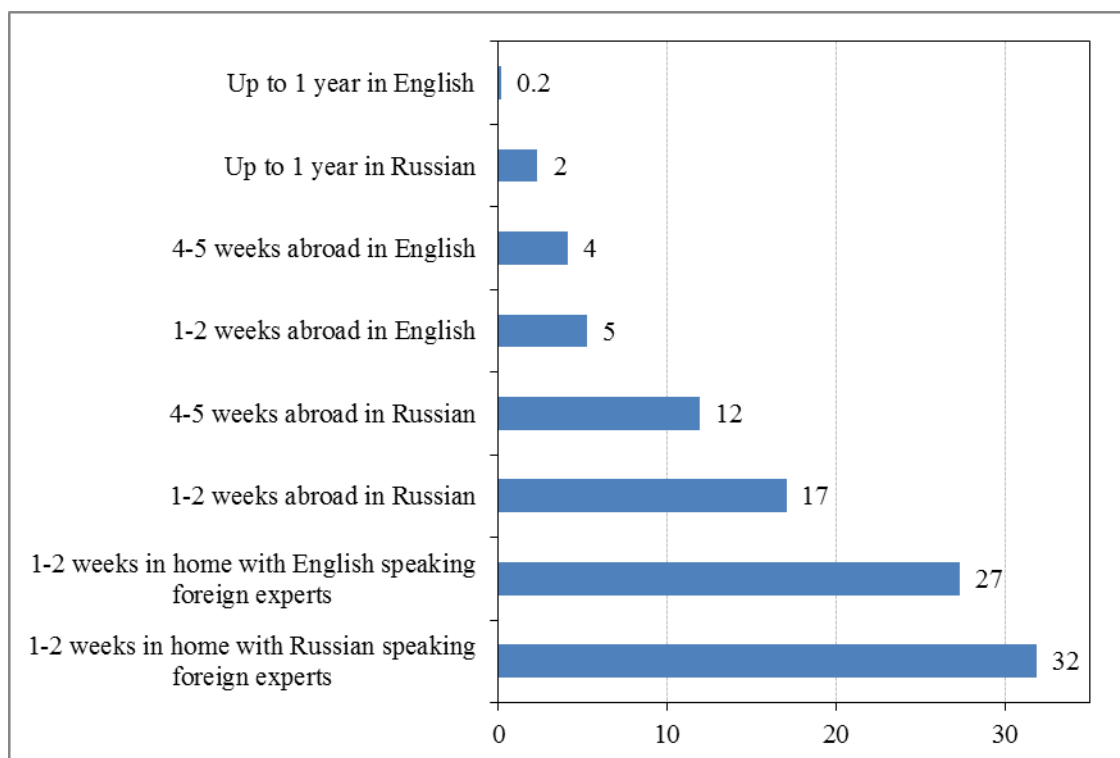
The questioner also asked CIS NSOs about potential demand for trainings using hypothesis of unlimited resources. Unfortunately, some countries did not answer for this question. For instance, Russia did not answer², so it was impossible to evaluate the total demand for the region. Regarding responded countries, none answered that actual scale of training meet its demand. The hungriest for trainings was Belorussia with about 500 potential trainees. Armenia is interested in training courses on “Russian language for statisticians”.

² Actually Russia answered that Rosstat is interested in the only form of training of 1-2 weeks in home with English speaking guest trainers. Totally Rosstat needs to train 255 staffs using this type of training (about 85 staffs annually).

Graph 3 Share of satisfied demand for trainings by statistical point



Graph 4 Structure of demand by type of training



Regarding the availability of own funds to finance trainings the most of countries straightforwardly answered that they have not ones. Only Russia and Azerbaijan reported that they have some resources to participate in international trainings or/and to invite guest trainers from abroad.

Trainings were provided within the project

Training courses provided to CIS statisticians within this project had some special features.

First, all training courses were based on methodological materials provided by international agencies sponsored this project. It was made to insure the international quality of trainings.

Second, all courses were in Russian, because most of CIS statisticians are Russian speakers but only few of them are English speakers (see Graph 2).

Work was organized using the following algorithm:

1. The international agencies provide MISO with necessary teaching materials in English (8 sets);
2. Teaching materials are translated to Russian and adopted to CIS specific realities, if necessary, by MISO's experts;
3. International agencies and CIS Statcom supervise the process controlling the quality and advising the MISO staffs;
4. MISO delivers 4 pilot trainings to SIC statisticians selected by CIS Statcom in cooperation with CIS NSOs, in Russian;
5. All pilot trainings include, beside standard lectures and exercises, Master Classes with leading experts from host statistical agency and presentations of trainees about their country's experience in discussed topic;
6. Final interview of trainees is also included to training schedule. Feedback is used to improve teaching materials;
7. Improved teaching materials are transferred to CIS Statcom for future use.

The following trainings were delivered within the project

	Topic	Sponsor agency	Pilot training	Time
1	Statistical management	The World Bank Institute	Moldova	September, 2011
2	Volume indexes for industrial production	UNIDO	Moscow	May, 2012

3	Consumer price index	UN ECE	no	
4	Measurement of Information Society	OECD	no	
5	Sampling	The World Bank Institute	Moscow	April, 2012
6	Input-output tables	The World Bank Institute	no	
7	Millennium goals for Central Asian countries	UN ECE	no	
8	Gender statistics	UN ECE	Moscow	May, 2012

At the moment all project objectives were achieved. 80 statisticians from Russia, Ukraine, Belorussia, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kirgiz Republic, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan were trained in 4 pilot courses, 8 set of teaching materials were prepared and submitted to CIS Statcom. Project is over. Both The World Bank and CIS NSOs were satisfied with results and support idea to develop the training system for CIS NSOs in future.

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