



Statistical Centre of Iran

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STATISTICAL CENTRE OF IRAN

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**IN THE NAME OF ALLAH
THE COMPASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL**

An Introduction to the Statistical Centre of Iran (SCI)

The Statistical Centre of Iran is the major supplier of statistical information in the country. In addition to data production in social, economic and cultural areas, the SCI is responsible for coordinating the statistical concepts and definitions as well as evaluation and improvement of the produced statistical data. The SCI, a descendant of the former Department of Public Statistics—affiliated to the Ministry of the Interior – began to work in 1965 as a professional institute affiliated to the then Plan and Budget Organization (PBO) for collection, production and dissemination of official statistics under its special law approved in the same year. In the year 2000, the PBO was merged with the Department of Administrative and Recruitment Affairs into the Management and Planning Organization. Eventually in the year 2006, the MPO turned into the Vice Presidency for Strategic Planning and Supervision to which the SCI is now affiliated.

Since establishment, the SCI, as the sole authority of the national statistics, has been continuously working to accomplish its mission in the best possible manner in order to promote the statistical awareness among the public and help to develop an informed society which in turn would strengthen the foundations for efficient and working social and economic planning and reflect the demographic, social and economic profiles of the nation. The Centre annually conducts as many as 30 statistical surveys.

Recruitment

Q1. Do the recruited staffs possess the professional skills generally needed by NSO? Or is significant additional training required? Which skill area is the greatest ongoing problem?

Although staffs recruited by the Statistical Centre of Iran (SCI) hold university degrees, they do not necessarily have professional skills needed by the SCI. Hence, the SCI tries to hold appropriate training courses for its new staffs as well as to offer them applied training in order to promote their technical skills levels. Supplying staffs skillful in the field of national accounts seems to be more challenging compared with other specialized fields.

Q2. Do you use or have used any special strategies for recruitment to ensure new staff have required skills? (e.g. cadetships, graduate recruitment programs, take graduates from associated statistical training institutes). Please list the strategies and indicate which ones are successful and which ones have not been successful and why.

Recruiting new staffs usually is done through public vacancy announcement. In some special cases, announcement on recruiting new staff is also reported to higher education institutes in which there are specialized fields of study needed by the SCI. Staff recruitment is conducted in two stages: written tests and interviews. Moreover, the SCI uses two special ways for recruitment of new staff

- ◆ *Employment of top graduates of universities*
- ◆ *Temporary employment of universities graduates as apprentices and then permanent recruitment of top people from among them (screening method)*

Q3. Have you worked closely with universities to ensure graduate programs meet the skills needs of NSO? Please briefly describe any arrangement.

In this area, the SCI has taken the following mechanisms:

- ◆ Creating a major on official statistics in nation's universities. In recent years, the SCI has had negotiations with the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology on establishment of official statistics discipline so that the syllabuses of the course shall be based on the SCI's needs. Moreover, according to the National Strategy for Development of Statistics (NSDS)¹, such a discipline is going to be created in the nation's universities. Creating disciplines related to national accounts compilation and price

¹ . National Statistics Plan

indices with BA and MA degree in Economic field in nation's universities was introduced within NSDS

- ◆ An agreement with some universities for specialized training of manpower needed by the SCI in MA and Doctorate degrees.
- ◆ Collaboration with "Iranian Statistical Society" for revision of syllabuses of specialized subjects of statistics field appropriate with applied needs of National Statistical System

Development of manpower

Q4. Does your NSO have staff development plan that is linked to goals and objectives of its long-term strategic plan or National Strategy for Development of Statistics?

In NSDS, for preparation of which the SCI is responsible in collaboration with ministries and other government agencies, strategies and quantitative objectives related to capacity building of staff are stipulated. In this NSDS, quantitative and qualitative development of staff in the SCI and statistical units of the ministries and government agencies has been taken into accounts. Currently, the Second NSDS has been formulated within the Fifth Five-year Plan of Economic, Social and Cultural Development of the country for the period of 2010-2014.

Q5. How does your NSO integrate the need of professional development of individual employees into the long-term plan?

Identifying the SCI's needs for skillful manpower is carried out on the basis of the evaluation of existing condition and the SCI's future needs. The needs are included in NSDS. In the NSDS, special strategy of the SCI is to develop IT, establish IT-based statistical system and train needed manpower.

Q6. How does your organization identify the need for professional capability building of each individual employee?

The SCI has a "Comprehensive Training Program" which is implemented by the Office of Training and Management Services on an annual basis. In this Program, training requirements of the SCI staff members including their general and specialized training needs are identified according to the job duties and capabilities needed for each job on the basis of NSDS's objectives. Accordingly, the annual training calendar of the SCI is formulated and implemented.

Q7. What are the main means used for development of professional skills of staff? (e.g. formal courses, on-the-job training, self help courses, certificates or post graduate courses offered by universities, training programs conducted by international organisations, study tours) Which means are considered to be the most effective and why? Which means are considered to be the least effective and why?

In order to promote technical skills of the staff, different methods are used by the SCI such as: holding in-service training courses, dispatching staff members to international training courses or sending them to domestic and overseas training missions. Among these training courses, long-term training by International organizations is more effective than the others due to their duration, level and quality of training.

Q8. How does your organization select employees to participate in training or other capacity building activities, especially funded by international organizations?

Selection of the individuals for international training courses are carried out on the following bases: rank and major of the staff, his/her terms of reference based on conditions and prerequisite needed for training course.

Q9. What performance measures does your organization use to assess the effectiveness of capacity building efforts? Please describe the key indicators that you found useful in measuring the success of capacity building initiatives supported by your NSO or by others.

(If your organization has an agreed/draft list of capacity building indicators, please share it as annex to your country paper

The SCI uses MBO in its activities including capability building of manpower. Other initiatives, such as job rotation, job enrichment, contribution of talented staff to research activities along with organization's activities and improvement of manpower capacity building, are used.

In training section, effectiveness assessment process of training courses is used. In this process, some indicators are prepared to measure the effectiveness of each training course based on their objectives and curriculum. At the end of each training course, assessment forms are distributed among the learners and their managers to receive their feedbacks about the training course. The information required for preparing these indicators is collected based on the provided feedbacks. The following topics are included in the assessment form.

- Degree of novelty of training subjects

- The quality of the training materials and documents
- Appropriateness of the course time with the contents covered
- Scientific competence of the instructor and his/her proficiency in the subject.
- Oratory capabilities of the instructor and his ability to make sense of the course content.
- To what degree has the instructor been able to answer the questions of the learners?
- The ability of the instructor to motivate the learners to participate in the course
- Successive and systematic presentation of the training curriculum
- Using applied examples for better understanding
- Suitability of training equipment and facilities
- Suitability of the physical conditions of the course environment

Organizational Strategies

Q10. Are there special career paths for professional staff? Please describe arrangements.

Job promotion of the employees of the SCI has been stipulated in the government employees' law. According to this law, all professional staff should meet the professional and scientific requirements for their job promotion. The SCI started studies for improvement of course of job promotion of its staff as well as for revision possibility of the current law.

Q11. How does your NSO determine the professional skills its employees need in order to meet current, emerging and future statistical information requirements?

In the annual "Comprehensive Training Program" all skills and expertise needed for every staff have been determined and planning for training courses is based on these needs.

Q12. Are competencies for various positions spelt out and do incentives exist for staff to obtain new competencies? Please describe the arrangements, if yes.

The qualification needed for each organizational post in the SCI is determined and the employees of the SCI should meet the qualification to get the tenure of the posts. Parameters such as individual creativity and innovation are effective factors for job promotion. Position promotion

which is accompanied by more authorities in professional field provides more suitable ground for emerging creativities and effectiveness in job environment. Moreover, promotions and fringe benefits are considered effective motives.

Q13. Is staff membership of professional associations encouraged? Is there active NSO participation?

The SCI encourages its employees to join the domestic professional associations like "Iranian Statistical Society" and participate in the biennial "Iranian Statistical Conference". This provides a good opportunity for the employees to have an active participation in the professional event. The employees of the SCI are interested in joining the international professional associations as well.

Q14. Have decisions on organisational and job structure been made to address capability? e.g. centralisation of functions such as methodology or subject expertise. Please provide details, if yes.

Due to technical and scientific developments that create new needs, revision of the organizational charts and responsibilities of the SCI offices is done. The most obvious revision is related to ICT which involves this revision. Using method of Business Processing Reengineering –BRP- to improve professional capabilities in the organization is taken into account.

Q15. Does the range of work available in the organisation attract and retain qualified staff? – e.g. analysis as well as operational work

Different activities are done in the SCI which need special expertise. The activities include different expertise ranging from statistics, economy, demography, computer to social science and engineering. The expertise provides various ground for creating many jobs in the SCI. The SCI tries to recruit and maintain its employees.

Q16. Is there a formal regular program for particular categories of staff to broaden their knowledge and skills?

The SCI considers three groups as target groups and provides special training programmes for them.

- ◆ Supervision groups that are trained to supervise statistical surveys

- ◆ IT groups which consist of workforces engaged in hardware and software sections.
- ◆ New staff groups which have recently joined to the organization and need applied and professional training.

Q17. Are professional skills obtained regularly by contracting in staff or contracting out work?

In the previous years, the SCI has established Statistical Research and Training Centre (SRTC) which is responsible for training and research programme. In order to organize theoretical and applied training courses and conduct research projects, the SRTC concludes an agreement with domestic and international training and research institutes and overseas organizations such as SIAP, UNFPA and ECO.

Other

Q18. Have developments in IT made the development and maintenance of the capability of national statistical service easier or more challenging? How?

Undoubtedly, developments of information technology and knowledge have worked in improvement of the capacities required for offering statistical services. Although at the initial stages of every process, some executive difficulties may occur due to novelty of the subject and lack of coordination, the difficulties gradually disappear when the desirable results of the process are declared. Information technology development has had a very significant impact on various fields of statistical activities such as statistics dissemination and statistical information supply. Establishing the nation's statistical database and using information & communication technology have helped the SCI improve statistical information dissemination at national level. In the Fifth Five-year Plan of Economic, Social and Cultural Development of the country, the e-government has been taken into accounts, one module of which is development of IT- based Statistical System.

Q19. Are the professional requirements of NSO acknowledged in your government? Or is there no special recognition and allocation of staff occurs without consideration of the professional capability of the NSO?

This issue is considered in government body. High Council of Statistics composed of high ranking representatives of the ministries and governmental organizations provides a ground for raising issues and

needs of Iranian statistical system as well as decision making on them. Recruiting manpower for the SCI is done on the basis of the organization's professional needs.

Capability of the national statistical service

Q20. What is the general level of professional capability of the national statistical service as a whole compared with that of the NSO? Lower, the same, or higher?

Since the SCI is the national statistical focal point and responsible for directing the country's statistical system, it plays a pivotal and higher role in the system.

Q21. Does the NSO or some other government body have strategies for developing the professional capability of the national statistical service? (e.g. career paths managed service wide, outpostings, secondment of staff, inpostings, fellowships, joint or collaborative projects,

Strategies pertaining to improvement and development of the country statistical system have been taken into accounts in the NSDS. The strategies include:

- awarding scholarship to talented staff
- approval of qualification of private statistical companies for contribution to statistical activities
- contribution of universities in conducting research and statistical surveys

Q22. Which professional capabilities are the most challenging to develop or maintain? Please explain why

Analysis and interpretation of statistical indicators prepared by the SCI and decision aiding by government agencies are the most important challenges.

Part B

Preserving professional independence and observing statistics confidentiality are among important strategies of the SCI. Use of this strategy is based on the SCI's ACT which declares the SCI as national statistics focal point and directing body of the nation's statistical system. The Para 7 of the Act indicates the confidentiality of statistics based on which the SCI can strengthen its statistical activities, statistical reference and professional independence.

One of the important strategies to enhance manpower's professional knowledge in the SCI is to formulate a Comprehensive Training Program which is performed according to training needs of the Centre's offices, the staffs' responsibilities and Job experiences. Annual training programs, approved by the SCI's Training Council, includes both professional and general trainings. They are approved and then communicated to the Centre's offices by the Council. Conducting in-service trainings is a pivotal part of this program which is carried out in cooperation with SRTC that is responsible for conducting research and training programs of the SCI. Training courses are conducted on a contract basis signed between SRTC and other training institutes. Those participants, who fail the course and can not receive its certificate, are obliged to reimburse the course costs themselves. Receipt of training courses certificates and number of participation hours in training courses bring benefits to the learners. The benefits are given to the learners annually