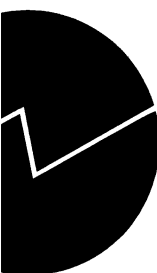


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Mid-Term Review

Twining Arrangement 1997-2000,
Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics
and Statistics Norway, April 1999



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Abstract: The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, NORAD, provides financial support to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, PCBS, during the period 1999-2000 to assist in building and strengthening the institutional capacity of PCBS. Technical support is provided by Statistics Norway in a Twining Arrangement with PCBS. An internal mid-term review of the project was carried out by a Mission of experts in April 1999.

The Mission was asked to review the progress of the project and the coverage and quality of the statistics produced, to evaluate the project management, to advise on developing regular production of statistics, and present proposals on cooperation on technical management and administration.

The Mission was impressed by how PCBS has succeeded in establishing a program of regular production of quality statistics in just a few years and considers this a major achievement. There is still scope for further improvement such as in utilisation of registers, in management, dissemination and in moving towards a more comprehensive coverage to serve the Palestinian society at large.

The Mission summarised the review in a number of recommendations as follows: i) Attention to areas having faced special difficulties in data collection; ii) Adoption of new methods for selecting technical experts emphasising flexibility in approach; iii) Emphasis on moving from project-based to regular production of statistics; iv) Increased attention to management at all levels; v) Some reallocations within the project; vi) Increased emphasis on presentation and dissemination; and vii) Enhancing utilisation of administrative records for official statistics.

It is envisaged that these recommendations are to be considered jointly by the two partner institutions, PCBS and Statistics Norway, and proposals brought forward for the upcoming semi-annual meeting between PCBS and NORAD.

Keywords: National Statistical Office, Norway, Palestine, Review, Technical co-operation, Twining Arrangement.

JEL classification: Technical co-operation.

Acknowledgement: The review was financed under the Twining Arrangement between PCBS and Statistics Norway.

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1. Introduction

At the semi-annual meeting of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, PCBS, and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, NORAD, held in Al-Bireh on 2 February 1999, the parties agreed “to send a High Level Mission to the PCBS to carry out a mid-term review of the project including statistical priorities, management, planning, financial analysis etc.” The report from the mid-term review, together with a NORAD appraisal of the findings of the Mission, should form the basis for discussions at the next semi-annual meeting. Furthermore, it was decided that the mid-term review would start as soon as possible. Terms of reference for the Mission were to be drafted by the PCBS and presented to NORAD and Statistics Norway for comments.

The parties subsequently discussed the terms of reference in their drafting stage and on the basis of these agreed on the timing and the composition of the Mission. In conformity with these decisions, the Mission took place on 10-20 of April 1999. The Mission was composed of Mr. Hallgrímur Snorrason, Director General of Statistics Iceland - Head of Mission, Mr. Olav Ljones, Assistant Director General of Statistics Norway, and Mr. Bjørn K. Wold, Head of the International Consulting Division of Statistics Norway. At the PCBS, the Mission enjoyed the co-operation and assistance of the PCBS project co-ordinator, Mr. Yousef Falah and the Statistics Norway Team Leader at the PCBS, Mr. Per Schønning.

2. The Tasks of the Mission

The main tasks of the Mission are, according to the terms of reference (cf. Annex 1), to be considered against the main approach of the support programme as described in the Project Document (1996), paragraph 0.3:

“The main approach will be one of building and strengthening the institutional capacity of the PCBS. There will be four elements in this approach:

- ***Regular production of quality statistics:*** *Establishing routines for a regular production, analysis, presentation and dissemination of agreed selected subject matter population, social and area statistics;*
- ***Statistical methods and standards:*** *Establishing routines for a regular review and update of statistical methods and standards, reflecting the situation and the needs of the Palestinian society and international methods and standards;*
- ***Institutional co-operation:*** *building and strengthening the capacity to listen, interact and respond to official, private and public needs for and use of statistical information and to work with other institutions producing related information.*
- ***Management:*** *Building and strengthening the capacity of the system to manage, plan and conduct the work of the PCBS as an institution.”*

The tasks of the Mission are spelled out in detail in the terms of reference where it says:

“the expert team shall:

- 1. Review the Status and Progress of the Project compared with objectives, purposes and planned output.*
- 2. Evaluate the coverage and quality of the statistics being regularly produced and disseminated compared with the information needs of the Palestinian society.*
- 3. Evaluate the management of the Twinning Arrangement between the PCBS and Statistics Norway, including management of the project, the Team Leaders' and the Project Co-ordinator's role, the Technical Assistance and the Study Trips.*
- 4. Give advice on how to move from a project oriented organisation to regular production of statistics.*
- 5. Present a proposal for how to initiate the co-operation on technical management and administration. It is envisaged that this proposal will serve as the input for a workshop conducted with support from Statistics Norway, allowing the PCBS staff to outline a detailed plan for this work.*
- 6. Propose changes in the Project Document.*
- 7. Present the recommendations at the next semi-annual meeting between the PCBS and Statistics Norway.”*

The work of the Mission has been carried out in a series of meetings, discussions and consultations with the PCBS staff. Initially, the Mission had an introductory meeting with the president of the PCBS, Dr. Hasan Abu-Libdeh. Following that, there were meetings between the Mission, the PCBS Project Co-ordinator, the Statistics Norway Team Leader, and each of the directorates that have been involved with the project. The director generals of the four directorates and the heads of the departments attended these. The meetings gave a good overview over the project elements in question, the state of the art of the work at hand, the technical assistance received so far, the main direction of the work and the possible need for further assistance. Following these meetings, the Mission visited all the departments that are involved in the project or affected by it. These discussions had the main objective of providing the Mission with greater information of the work being carried out in the departments concerned and more concrete evidence of their statistical production and dissemination. A review of these discussions for the departments funded fully or partly, directly or by overhead by the NORAD project, is presented in an annex. Furthermore, the Mission consulted with senior PCBS staff on specific issues as well as with the PCBS Project Co-ordinator and the Norwegian Team Leader.

The meetings and the discussions with the PCBS staff members were both fruitful and interesting from a professional point of view. The Mission found the PCBS experts to be knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their work and eager to share their experience with the visitors. This greatly facilitated the work of the Mission and made it professionally interesting and rewarding. In addition, the Mission was warmly received by PCBS staff members who went out of their way to make the visitors feel welcome.

The Mission would like to express its appreciation and gratitude to the president and the staff of the PCBS for their friendly co-operation and warm hospitality.

3. Evaluation of the Management of the Project and the Twinning Arrangement

The so-called twinning arrangement is outlined in the Project Document (1996) and is also based on the contract for the partnership arrangement between the PCBS and Statistics Norway. In the Project Document (1996), the twinning arrangement is said to be one of the four cornerstones of the project, giving “the overall modality for how to provide support” during the four-year project period. This refers directly to the management of the project as such and is further elaborated in the contract between the PCBS and Statistics Norway and can be viewed as the short-term aim of the arrangement. The long-term aim would be to reach beyond the present project period and relate to the continued institutional co-operation between the two central statistical institutions. The foundations for this continued institutional co-operation should be laid by the present project.

There are many possible indicators that might be used to describe the twinning arrangement, and one indicator could be the number of missions, study tours etc. The twinning arrangement has been acceptable in “volume”. It is our impression that most of the missions have been conducted with a positive outcome and in a friendly atmosphere. This impression is based upon talks with staff members in both Statistics Norway and the PCBS. One should also bear in mind when this twinning arrangement is evaluated, that these staff members come from different institutions with different backgrounds and experiences.

3.1. Team Leader Issues

According to the Project Document (1996), the tasks of the Norwegian team leader at the PCBS is a combination of administrative tasks and general technical support in a broad range of areas based upon the team leader’s general statistical competence and experience. The other part has been spent on the team leader’s specialised competence. The Mission is very pleased to know how the Norwegian team leader and the PCBS Project Co-ordinator have established and maintained a thorough planning and monitoring system for the sub-components and activities of the project. This will clearly represent an important input to the overall PCBS activity planning process which is scheduled to start with the planning for year 2000 in July 1999. The Mission would like to emphasise the importance of the involvement of the PCBS Project Co-ordinator in the overall PCBS planning process to ensure that the planning of the NORAD project is well integrated in the overall PCBS activities. The Mission finds that if the PCBS Project Co-ordinator ensures the co-ordination, the focus of the Norwegian team leader might be more on technical support to statistical subject matter areas. The technical support for administration and management should be provided by the management sub-component of the NORAD project as discussed in the chapters on "Management and Administration" and "Changes in the Project Document".

3.2. Short-term Technical Assistance

The short-term administration of the project has been discussed for quite some time and it is evident that Statistics Norway has not felt comfortable with some of the procedures that are applied for selecting experts for technical assistance. In

discussions with the Mission, the PCBS has emphasised that this should be a matter of the past, and that the project planning and administration is now running a smooth course and is quite satisfactory.

There is no doubt that the administration of the project has improved. In particular, mention should be made of the progress that has been made by introducing and applying a budget and financial accounting system for the project. However, some of the administrative procedures that are applied are still causing difficulties and might harm the twinning arrangement.

For Statistics Norway, the main difficulty concerns the process of selection of experts. The current practice is that the PCBS should have the option to choose from two candidates for each technical assistance mission. To make that possible, Statistics Norway has to find at least two candidates available and send CVs for each of them to the PCBS, which then has the right to make a choice.

There are mainly three things at issue here. First, the practice with two experts to choose between creates difficulties. In order to comply with the rule, Statistics Norway has first to identify qualified experts and then find out if they are interested in and willing to accept such an assignment. The superiors to these experts must also be consulted, partly to discuss the suitability of the expert in question and partly because it would otherwise undermine the relationship with that person and his unit. When the choice is made, the person who has not been selected might interpret this as a rejection, a negative reflection on his or her abilities and an element of being downgraded. This is hardly acceptable, but the more serious consideration is that this may negatively affect the interest of experts in liaising with the project and the PCBS.

Secondly it might also be difficult to find two qualified candidates. A person could be recruited from another country such as through the Nordic network. This may work well as long as there is a clear request for one candidate. Statistics Norway has, however, found it very difficult to find candidates willing to allocate time well ahead of the visit just in order to be on a waiting list and compete for an assignment.

The third issue concerns the practice of basing a choice mainly on CVs. These are written in a variety of ways and they may not be comparable and could easily be misleading.

The main concern expressed by PCBS is to ensure a high quality of every expert provided by Statistics Norway. The Mission fully supports the PCBS underlining of how important it is that the recruiting process secures the quality of experts and suggests that Statistics Norway has to undertake a careful consideration of each request at an early stage. This consideration should aim to identify whether Statistics Norway has qualified candidates or should use the Nordic contact network or other contact networks among national statistical offices to find qualified experts.

Another issue that has been raised concerns the terms of reference that the PCBS writes for each mission of technical assistance. These have earlier been judged by Statistics Norway as being somewhat inflexible and sometimes overly detailed. A related issue is that in the past it has sometimes taken a long time to produce these.

On the other hand, the PCBS has experienced problems with the arrangement when Statistics Norway has not been able to supply candidate experts at the time when the PCBS has felt an acute need for that. Sometimes the technical assistance has been

delayed. This can partly be explained by the difficulties in presenting two candidates and two CVs as described above or that the PCBS process of approving or selecting candidates has been slow. Partly, however, this indicates that Statistics Norway to some extent has not placed high enough priority on fulfilling its obligation under the twinning arrangement.

The Mission feels that the parties should change their practices in these respects. As regards the selection of experts, the Mission proposes that the present practice be laid aside and that a procedure be adopted similar to that applied in technical co-operation programmes that Statistics Norway is engaged in with some other countries. This procedure implies that Statistics Norway and its counterpart start by agreeing on terms of reference and discussing the necessary qualifications for an expert to be found for the assignment. Statistics Norway then suggests a particular person for the assignment whom the recipient country accepts or rejects on the basis of information supplied by Statistics Norway. This arrangement has not caused any problems or dissatisfaction for either of the countries in question. Indeed, it is the usual one in technical co-operation between countries. However, a precondition for this is that the party supplying the technical assistance assigns sufficiently high priority to this. In other words, Statistics Norway would have to pay even closer attention to this obligation.

A particular point should be made of the selection of experts for follow-up missions or more precisely for a second or later mission on the same subject. In such cases, the rule should invariably be that the same expert as came the first time or has been coming should be chosen again, given of course a positive evaluation of the previous assignment. This is important for reasons of continuity but also as selecting another expert may affect the project negatively as described above. This element also underlines how important it is to include a simple method of evaluation of each mission and expert.

As regards the terms of reference, these should be agreed on between the parties. They should contain the main objectives, expected outputs and issues to be worked on.. Detailed job-descriptions should be avoided. The terms should explicitly allow for flexibility and should contain a clause charging the visiting expert with the responsibility to be flexible in his or her approach and solutions.

The PCBS has now started to prepare the terms of reference for a whole year in advance for all the technical assistance missions that are envisaged in that year. This should ensure that there are no delays in this respect, providing that there are no delays in the formal approval. The Mission recommends this work to be linked to the activity planning process.

Finally, the Mission emphasises the importance of planning for proper follow-up of the short-term missions. Such follow-up should be a standard feature of the technical assistance missions, with possible needs for resources being taken into account at the initial planning stage. Furthermore, the follow-up work required should utilise all available technical means and its content and modus vivendi be properly planned at the end of each mission.

4. Establishing Regular Production of Statistics

The initial development of the PCBS has concentrated on rapid building of an institution with the necessary basic knowledge and basic data for each of the subject matters. This has been done by conducting numerous large scale surveys of which the Population and Housing Census is by far the largest and most important. To manage this in so few years is an impressive achievement.

For this reason the operations of the PCBS and their planning procedures have mainly been “project based”. At the same time it has been necessary to recruit staff from the bottom, establish competence and build an institution. On top of this, conclusions about the work programme and practical solutions have had to be drawn in a surrounding with several advisers with different backgrounds. At the same time, there has been a need for strong and dedicated management but also a management model so flexible that one could easily adapt to changes in the setting. The setting has changed due to changes in the aims and contributions of donors and also from changes in the Palestinian priorities.

Once the basis has been established, the regular statistical production can begin. The new phase will still have a need for development but now with an increasing part of the workload as a continuous running operation. One of the characteristics of national statistical institutes is that the statistical output is continuous and predictable. After some years, comparable time series of crucial indicators should be an important element of historical databases in the PCBS. The management and internal culture in the PCBS should adapt to these new claims and from then on, the operations and their planning should be “activity based”.

The planning and budgeting process in the PCBS should to some extent start with establishing priorities and giving sufficient resources to the maintenance of the most important time series. In conjunction with this, the further development and adaptations to future changes in priorities and settings should be determined.

There is quite some evidence that although regular statistical production has started, the operations of the individual units still have the character of being seen as series of projects rather than activities. This may be linked to the fact that the operations in question have been financed by project funds where the financing has been decided on project by project, or so it may at least appear to the staff in charge of the activity. To change this in the way outlined above calls for both increased application of activity planning and a change in the institutional culture. This is discussed further in the next section.

5. Management and Administration

The subject of management is one of the four elements of the project. This is defined to involve “building and strengthening the capacity of the system to manage, plan and conduct the work of the PCBS as an institution”. On this subject, the Project Document (1996) goes on to explain that the programme of support from the German GTZ supports the building of a Management Information System (MIS) with a heavy emphasis on activity planning and budgeting. The NORAD project, on the other hand, includes technical assistance to high level professional and administrative management and the administrative directorate of the PCBS and study trips to Statistics Norway.

A number of important developments in the area of management have taken place at the PCBS. The Management Information System supported by GTZ has already been introduced and is in operation. It is reported to allow for activity planning and budgeting and the inter-linkage of these elements. Moreover, activity planning has been introduced and the operations of the PCBS management and Council are being geared towards that. It has already been decided that the planning and budgeting process for individual activities in the year 2000 shall start around mid-year 1999 or considerably earlier than in previous years. Under the NORAD project, management and administration issues have been discussed by the Director General of Statistics Norway during his visits to the PCBS. A programme of study trips to Statistics Norway on the subject of management was initiated in December 1998. This first trip involved three high-level PCBS administrators that spent a week in Oslo studying the management, budgeting and activity planning system deployed by Statistics Norway. This visit was reported to be very successful, the findings of the PCBS mission were discussed in the Council and decisions taken on follow-up actions. Another study trip to Statistics Norway involving the senior PCBS managers is planned for June of this year.

In discussions between the Mission and some senior PCBS managers three areas in management and administration have been identified as being suitable for technical co-operation under the NORAD umbrella. These can be labelled:

- planning and management culture,
- strategic planning, and
- follow-up procedures.

All of these are of course only different aspects of the overall theme of management. There is full agreement between the Mission and the PCBS managers that it is important that the philosophy and the methodology are introduced at all levels of management. In order to gain acceptance and become operative, it is important that middle management in the PCBS, the heads of departments, is made fully cognisant of these issues and methods. This is what is referred to as creating the necessary administrative culture.

The question of strategic planning is closely related to this, but concerns a wider horizon or a longer-term period. The follow-up issue is crucial but is often neglected i.e. there is little point in applying modern activity planning methods unless strict procedures for a regular follow-up or monitoring are put in place and practised. Together, these management issues have the main goal of strengthening and adding stability to the PCBS and its regular production of official statistics by being less dependent on day-to-day supervision and management and more geared towards regular activity planning, budgeting and monitoring.

The Mission is of the opinion that these subjects are well suited to be tackled in special training courses. These should be given to all higher and middle managers, i.e. department heads. The courses should involve the introduction of the theory of activity planning and the culture behind it, lessons that can be learned from other national statistical institutes as well as practical examples based on real issues within the PCBS. Such courses might then be followed up by study trips for particular groups focusing on particular subjects or techniques.

6. Changes in the Project Document

As stated in the terms of reference, the Mission reviewed the Project Document (1996) and the need for updating. The Project Document (1996) describes both some of the general strategic aims for the PCBS and the exact part of the work programme to be granted by NORAD. This is of course a difficult task for several reasons. Since the total work programme as it was drawn up in The Master Plan (1994) was divided between different donors and after some years also the Palestinian National Authorities (PNA), the NORAD work programme in reality has been defined as a result of a process of dividing tasks between donors. This process is not described but to some extent the Project Document (1996) (including all amendments) describes project elements after other donors have established their projects. One impression is that even after the Project Document (1996) was written there have been changes in the distribution of tasks between donors. This means that more or less running adaptations of the Project Document (1996) have been necessary.

Rather than to conduct an overall revision of the Project Document (1996), the Mission has considered how the input from the NORAD project could be included in the overall planning process at the PCBS. We learned that the planning process for year 2000 will start in July 1999 representing the first complete annual planning cycle based upon the MIS system and activity planning. With our experience from implementing an activity-based planning system, we suggest that there will be a need for technical support and back up. This should entail at least that somebody with management experience should follow the process and be at hand for consultation and advice. The Mission has learned that the GTZ project does not have the resources to support such an implementation process. Hence, a NORAD-funded involvement might be beneficial for ensuring two mutual aims. Firstly, the NORAD project may provide support to the implementation of the MIS-based activity planning. Secondly, the project may encourage a flexible revision of plans, well integrated with other financial support, by including the revision of the NORAD project within the overall activity planning at the PCBS.

This might include the following steps:

1. Update the long-term strategy based upon the Master Plan (1994) and the Project Document (1996).
2. Start the planning of the annual work programme for next year by establishing estimates of total available resources for the PCBS, summarising all donor and PNA contributions.
3. The President of the PCBS gives general guidelines and signals of priority for the year ahead.
4. Each directorate produces a first version of a work programme with estimates of resources needed for running production of statistics and development of new products. Statistics Norway and representatives of other donor institutions ought to participate in this process and draw up preliminary plans for both financial support and experts.
5. Statistics Norway together with NORAD, produces a work programme and a budget based on those preliminary discussions
6. The President of the PCBS balances the budget and work programme for the PCBS.

7. The final Statistics Norway/NORAD work programme is agreed upon in conjunction with the total work-programme for the PCBS.
8. Other donor groups should be requested to apply procedures similar to the those of Statistics Norway/NORAD as described here.

As stated above, the Mission has not found it feasible to undertake a complete revision of the Project Document (1996) at this stage, i.e. as it refers to the present phase of the project. However, there is already a need for considering the future of the project as there are only some 20 months remaining of the present project period. An eventual new phase of a NORAD/PCBS/Statistics Norway project will no doubt be the major item for discussion at the semi-annual meetings in Oslo, scheduled for June this year. In that connection, the Mission would recommend that the deliberations of the contracting parties of their future strategies should be based on a totally revised project document as regards disposition and structure. Furthermore, the Mission would like to point out the importance of starting the planning of the next phase without delay in order to allow ample time for inputs from all the parties concerned as well as consultations with other possible donors.

7. Reallocations of Existing Funds

7.1. Agricultural Survey

As a part of its evaluation, the Mission has been asked specifically to give its opinion on the proposal by the PCBS to include an agricultural survey in the NORAD project and have it financed through reallocations of existing resources. Agricultural statistics are not included in the project and such a survey has thus been treated as a new project component.

The present availability of agricultural data is scant and considered of poor quality. The Ministry of Agriculture collects the material, it refers to whole localities but not to individual holdings and to estimates rather than real counts or measurements. It does not fit with international standards and definitions. Hence, its use is very limited.

The plans for an agricultural survey seem well founded. They involve a sample survey of the structure of agricultural holdings. The sample size is planned to be 8.000 holdings or around 8% of the total number of Palestinian holdings as counted in the Population and Housing Census. The survey will collect data on e.g. the size and the type of holding, livestock, type of main crops, availability of machinery, use of fertilisers and pesticides, quantity of the main crops, farm employment and farm labour, and secondary activities of the holder. If funding was secured, the fieldwork of the survey could be carried out in August/September, which is probably the best time for covering both summer and winter crops. Preliminary estimates (i.e. made before a pilot survey has been undertaken) show a total cost of US\$ 150.000.

The Mission recommends that this activity is undertaken within the present frame of the project and financed out of reallocations of existing funds. The plans for this project seem sound, the scope of the survey appears to be realistic, both as regards the sample size and the survey content, and it seems relatively inexpensive. If successful, the ensuing material would be very valuable, not only for agricultural statistics but also for national accounts, environment statistics, land use statistics as well as certain social statistics.

7.2. Other Reallocations

The Mission has considered the scope for reallocations within the present framework of the project, and in that connection focused on the overall options for a potential extension of the time frame and reallocations across sub-components. The Mission reviewed the revised current budgets for both local and foreign costs and is convinced that while there are some minor potentials for savings, there is no room for an extension of the project into year 2001.

The Mission finds that a continuation of the education statistics based upon administrative records is well justified. The Mission also finds the work to digitise and develop census maps and extended use of these, such as inputs for the second phase of Street and Building Numbering Project in built-up areas, are well justified. The Mission therefore recommends that the financing of such activities should be considered for the activity planning for next year.

8. Presentation and Dissemination

So far the NORAD project within the PCBS has mainly concentrated on the preparation for and the development of the production of regular statistics in the fields covered by the project. Emphasis has, on the other hand, not been placed on the presentation and dissemination of the statistical output that is explicitly mentioned in the Project Document (1996).

One of the basic principles for official statistics and a national statistical institute is that high quality and impartial statistical results should be made available to the public. The results should be presented according to methodological standards and include descriptions of methods and principles. Confidentiality is a basic rule and in many ways the only principle that restricts user access to data. It is important that the release of results from new statistical surveys (also new versions of running statistics) follows predetermined rules for quality control and the release date.

It is important to establish the PCBS as a well-known institution, responsible for independent high quality, timely and comparable statistics. The dissemination strategy should support this by using a common and appropriate layout for the publications and secure that the publications reflect high quality statistical work. It is also important to develop a complete list of dissemination tools:

- Paper publications;
- Publishing on demand, paper and electronic;
- Access to anonymised microdata; and
- Internet.

To facilitate this dissemination strategy it is also helpful to establish a strategy for the use of databases for storage of:

- Primary data;
- Statistical results for open dissemination; and
- Metadata and standards

We have not been able to read through all publications and other media used by the PCBS, but it seems in general that all elements in a dissemination strategy have been identified.

These are:

- Publications, booklets and conventional statistical reports; A common design/layout is used and publications follow a common standard with technical descriptions (standards and principles), tables and figures (diagrams).
- Wall posters;
- Press releases;
- Internet; and
- CD-ROM.

In many ways, dissemination of PCBS statistics is still in its initial stage. As regards the publications from the PCBS, these show in general examples of professional statistical work but it is also clear that there is still a need for improvement, both in the selection and construction of tables and in the presentation of the material. The Mission is of the opinion that much more attention has to be paid to both presentation and dissemination. The statistical output must be presented in a clear and meaningful way to the great variety of users, many of whom have neither the training in the use of statistical tables nor the time or opportunity to acquire it. They may nevertheless be among the most important users. The communication with the user is smoothed if the user gets some minimum training in statistics. It is proposed that priority should be given to both these areas. For presentation, training courses would seem to be appropriate. These should include basic training in drawing up statistical tables and charts, planning publications, designing and writing of press releases and other presentations to the general users etc.

Linked to the dissemination work is the need to continue developing a well functioning library serving both PCBS staff and outside users of official statistics. A special issue is to ensure co-ordination of the work done by the library to disseminate information by responding to user requests and the work of the new Dissemination Department.

The Mission recognises the need to include provisions for support also to the Library while working to develop the overall PCBS dissemination strategy.

9. Administrative Records and Institutional Co-operation

One of the principles for official statistics is that data should only be collected once but used many times. This principle should be followed by the national statistical institutes and also by the whole public sector as far as it is relevant and applicable. This means that material that is collected originally by the government for administrative purposes, should also be available for the national statistical institute for the generation of official statistics. This strategy can greatly reduce the total cost of official statistics as well as ease the response burden.

This strategy is well described in the Project Document (1996) and the project places considerable emphasis on the use of administrative records and registers for the

generation of regular statistics. If this strategy is to be successful a number of preconditions have to be fulfilled. Indeed, the establishment of such a system is a long and difficult process, e.g. entailing the enactment of a legal base for official statistics as well as legislative measures for establishing the administrative routines and records that the central statistical institute needs to have access to.

Promoting the use by the PCBS of administrative records for statistical purposes has proven to be difficult. This is hardly surprising bearing in mind that the development of a modern central and local administrative institutional system in Palestine only started a few years ago. While problems of this kind are to be expected, it is all the more important that the needs of the central statistical system are kept squarely in mind in the planning of administrative procedures and when identifying administrative records that may render statistical data. To have influence on this development is a formidable task for the PCBS and the development of administrative registers etc. does not at present fully balance the plans for the use of administrative records for statistics. There are some specific explanations to some of these difficulties. One is that the available administrative registers are not computerised. Another is that the definitions and concepts applied by the administrative authorities and in the administrative records do not correspond to the statistical ones. The third is that the administrative data are often of poor quality.

A task of this kind is to promote the use of statistical information for policy making and planning in the ministries and other central and local government institutions. This entails substantial collaboration between the PCBS and the institutions on the following main issues:

- Identification of the information needs of ministries and other relevant public institutions.
- Discussion and direction by PCBS experts on how these needs may best be fulfilled, both by the own material of the institution and the PCBS statistics.
- Identification of which administrative records that may be a source of statistical information, either jointly by the parties or by the PCBS.
- Identification of what statistical needs that may be fulfilled by the utilisation of available or planned records.
- Identification of plans for new administrative procedures and records or changes in existing ones and discussions on how these might best serve statistical purposes.

Apart from such progressive actions, what is all important is that the PCBS is informed by other government agencies on all issues that concern administrative routines and records that may directly affect the operation of the PCBS. The Mission is aware of the central position of the PCBS in the Palestinian government structure. Further, that efforts have already been spent by the PCBS on enhancing its relations with other institutions and user groups or collaborating with other authorities on matters of common interest. Some of these actions have proved to be an immediate success, for example the collaboration between the PCBS and four municipalities on putting numbers on houses. The relationship between the PCBS and other public institutions as regards administrative records and procedures has, however, not progressed equally fast in all areas.

The promotion of institutional co-operation of this kind is as such not a part of the NORAD project. However, providing support to this process should indeed be a

component of the project, not least as this process may have considerable influence on the statistical development that the project aims at. The project focuses on providing support to PCBS and hence has clear limitations. Establishing functional relationships with other public institutions is properly a task for the institutions themselves, in this case the PCBS. Foreign assistance may well be considered improper for that objective. However, there may be instances where foreign experience may be utilised once the proper relations have been established between the PCBS and a public authority. This may either be done by acquiring technical assistance or through study visits. Civil registration can in particular be mentioned in this respect but other areas may include the registration of establishments and real estate, the utilisation of tax registers, customs files etc. The Mission is of the opinion that if such cases arise they should be considered a part of the project and allowed to be carried out within its framework.

Drawing up a comprehensive work programme for establishing functional relationships with other public institutions and on the development of the utilisation of administrative material for official statistics, including the setting of priorities, might be a useful step in this direction. In the opinion of the Mission, the construction of such a work programme might involve technical assistance and be financed under the project.

Finally, establishing proper relations and gaining recognition of the importance and indeed the social obligation of the relevant public agencies to pay attention to the needs for official statistics is a major undertaking. Experience, both from the Nordic countries and from Palestine, shows that this must be done at the very highest administrative level and by the personal involvement of the Chief Statistician of the country in question, i.e. the President of the PCBS. The success of the house-numbering project mentioned earlier, where the President of the PCBS was both very much involved and very visible, would seem to support this conclusion. There is no doubt that such high level and personal involvement may prove decisive for progress in the application of administrative records for the generation of official statistics. So far, a number of co-operation agreements with ministries and other public institutions have been signed. These have, however, on the whole not rendered the desired results of utilising administrative records for official statistics. The main reason is that the co-operating institutions do not regard statistical duties as their primary responsibility. One possible way to go, might be to stipulate in the co-operation agreements that the first step in the co-operation should be that the parties form a working group or assign contact persons that should draw up a work programme within a fixed time schedule. Such a work programme should be approved by the principals of the agreement and monitored at regular intervals.

10. Conclusions and Recommendations

In its terms of reference, the Mission was asked to evaluate the Norwegian support programme to the PCBS and the twinning arrangement between the PCBS and Statistics Norway and to give its opinion and advice on a number of specific issues.

It is the clear opinion of the Mission, that PCBS had gained much from the Norwegian support programme, that this has been successful and contributed to the extraordinary development of official statistics in Palestine. The review of the activities that have been carried out on the basis of the NORAD programme shows that real progress has

been made in all of the fields under review. In some cases, progress has been slower than envisaged while in other fields the opposite is the case. The development has been somewhat uneven as is to be expected. This has been caused by several factors. In some fields surveys have been very successful and rendered rich and very useful material. In other areas, data collection has proved to be problematic, not least when dependent upon administrative sources. In some instances staffing difficulties and high turnover of staff have caused delays in the development.

The PCBS as such has not been under review by the Mission, only the Norwegian support programme. Nevertheless, the Mission has learned much about the overall operations of the PCBS as statistical activities are rarely carried out in isolation but are intertwined, through data collection, data sharing, the sharing of expertise, technical know-how, support services etc. The picture that has emerged is very positive. Considering the very short time that has elapsed since the PCBS started its operations, the overall result is very impressive. In many fields where there was scant or no accurate knowledge of the social and economic situation, the foundations have been laid for official statistics of adequate standard. In others, regular statistical production has been started. The Population and Housing Census may be thought of as the single outstanding step in this development. *The Mission, however, is of the opinion that the major achievement lies in the organisation of regular and continuous production of official Palestinian statistics.*

Finally, the recommendations of the Mission might be summarised as follows:

- The development of the activities financed by NORAD has on the whole been very positive. In the second half of the project period it is recommended that special attention be paid to those areas that have faced special difficulties in data collection.
- In order to further ensure the smooth management of the project and administration of the twinning arrangement, new methods should be adopted for the selection of experts for technical assistance. At the same time, terms of reference should be made more succinct, providing for flexibility on behalf of the visiting expert in approaching and dealing with his task.
- The objective of moving from projects to regular production of statistics should be emphasised. In this respect, it is important to increase the insistence on activity planning and budgeting for continuous running operations. This may also require a change in attitudes and the development of a suitable institutional and managerial culture.
- The issue of management should be given increased attention. Training courses and study trips should be undertaken and focus on planning and operating a management culture, strategic planning and follow-up procedures.
- The agricultural survey that has been planned by the PCBS should be undertaken within the present frame of the project.
- Through reallocations, the funding of education statistics should be continued. The work to digitize and develop census maps and their utilisation for statistical purposes is also a good candidate for further reallocations if resources can be made available.
- Increased emphasis should be placed on presentation and dissemination in the second half of the project period. This might be done by training courses in presentation and by consultations and study trips on the subject of dissemination.

- Finally, two actions might be taken to enhance the utilisation of administrative records for official statistics. One is that a special work programme with priority settings and a time schedule be drawn up for this purpose. The other is that co-operation agreements between the PCBS and ministries and other public institutions should be strengthened by having working groups, work programmes and be monitored by the principal signatories. If foreign assistance might be found to be useful for assisting in drawing up a work programme or for concrete tasks on advising on administrative records or procedures, these could be undertaken within the framework of the programme.

11. Next Steps

As stated in the terms of reference, the Mission has recommended certain actions to further improve the NORAD project. It is envisaged that these recommendations are to be considered jointly by the two partner institutions, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics and Statistics Norway. Proposals should then be brought forward for the upcoming semi-annual meetings, either at the meeting between the two partner organisations and/or at the meeting between PCBS and NORAD, both scheduled for the second half of June 1999.

12. References

- Area Statistics in the Palestine Territory (1998), Ramallah, PCBS,
- Crime and Victimization Statistics in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (1998), Ramallah, PCBS, draft.
- Health Survey 1996 (1998), Ramallah, PCBS.
- Marriage and Divorce in Palestine Territories 1997 (1998), Ramallah, PCBS.
- Population, Housing and Establishment Census – 1997, Census Final Results – Summary (1998), Ramallah, PCBS.
- Project Document (1996), Support to Institutional Strengthening and Capacity building of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Twinning Arrangement with Statistics Norway, Ramallah, PCBS.
- Sub-Masterplan for Area Statistics (1998), Ramallah, PCBS, draft.
- The Master Plan for Palestine Official Statistics - Developing Palestine Official Statistics (1994, second edition 1995), Ramallah, PCBS.
- Victimization Survey – 1996, Main Findings (1997), Ramallah, PCBS
- Women and Men in Palestine, Trends & Statistics (1998), Ramallah, PCBS.

13. Annex 1: Terms of reference

13.1. Subject

Three experts for a high level mid-term evaluation mission on the Norad Project at PCBS, including the Twinning Arrangement between PCBS and Statistics Norway and serving as a base to initiate the management component

13.2. Background

The agreement between the Government of the Kingdom of Norway (represented by Norad) and the Palestinian Authority regarding support to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) states that:

«The *purpose* of the Project is to make PCBS better qualified to conduct research and to produce reliable data *regularly* and on demand from public and private institutions, by further *building and consolidating the institutional capacity* of PCBS as a national statistical service».

This point are further emphasized in the Project Document, paragraph 0.3:

«The main approach will be one of *building and strengthening the institutional capacity* of PCBS. There will be four elements in this approach:

- **Regular production of quality statistics:** Establishing routines for a regular production, analysis, presentation and dissemination of agreed selected subject matter population, social and area statistics;
- **Statistical methods and standards:** Establishing routines for a regular review and update of statistical methods and standards, reflecting the situation and needs of the Palestinian society and international methods and standards.
- **Institutional co-operation:** Building and strengthening the capacity to listen, interact and respond to official, private and public needs for and use of statistical information and to work with other institutions producing related information.
- **Management:** Building and strengthening the capacity of the system to manage, plan and conduct the work of PCBS as an institution», also considering reduced support in the time to come from other donors for this element.

The project and the co-operation between PCBS and Statistics Norway started already in 1996, the first Norwegian Team Leader being in place by early April 1997. The agreement between Norad and PNA was, however, not signed until 18th of September that year. The partners (Norad and PCBS; PCBS and Statistics Norway) agreed to meet semi-annually to review the progress of the project.

The Status and Progress report submitted from the Project Co-ordination Committee to the second semi-annual meeting between PCBS and Statistics Norway (7th of December 1998), listed the achievements of the project after the two first full years of the project period, the most important being the finalizing of the first Palestinian Population and Housing Census. The report, however, also stated project

implementation is slower than expected partly due to external reasons, but also partly due to internal problems.

On the basis of this report and on the discussions during the meeting, the semi-annual meeting asked for «a high level evaluation mission to take place within the next 6 months to go through the whole project and give recommendations for the next semi-annual meeting».

13.3. Reporting

The team of experts shall report on an overall basis to the next semi-annual meeting between PCBS and Statistics Norway, and on a daily basis to the President of the PCBS (or his representative) and the Director General of Statistics Norway (or his representative).

13.4. Tasks

The expert team shall

1. *Review* the Status and Progress of the project compared to objectives, purposes and planned output.
2. *Evaluate* the coverage and quality of the statistics being regularly produced and disseminated compared to the information needs of the Palestinian society.
3. *Evaluate* the management of the Twinning Arrangement between PCBS and Statistics Norway, including management of the project, the Team Leaders position, the Project Co-ordinators role, the Technical Assistance and the Study Trips.
4. *Give advice* on how to move from a project oriented organisation to the regular production of statistics.
5. Present a proposal for how to initiate the co-operation on technical management and administration. It is envisaged that this proposal will serve as the input for a workshop conducted with support from Statistics Norway, allowing the PCBS staff to outline a detailed plan for this work.
6. *Propose* changes in the Project Document.
7. *Present* the recommendations at the next semi-annual meeting between PCBS and Statistics Norway.

13.5. Qualifications required

The team shall consist of three experts, all three with experience from a national statistical bureau. One of the experts shall have long experience as head of a national statistical bureau and be the leader of the team. The second expert shall have experience at least at director general level (head of statistical directorate) within a national statistical bureau. The third expert should have previous experience with the Norad Project at PCBS either as Team Leader or Project Co-ordinator.

13.6. Preparations required

The *Project Co-ordination Committee* shall submit all available, necessary written documentation asked for to the expert team, including a description of all the existing statistical projects and programs within the PCBS: which programs are run on a regular basis, which are not; periodicity; etc. (cf. minutes from semi-annual meeting 7th of December 1998, paragraph 5, fourth bullet).

13.7. Expected output

Main output: An evaluation report with recommendations submitted to the next semi-annual meeting between PCBS and Statistics Norway. Additional output: Issue paper for technical management and administration.

13.8. Mission Report

A final draft of the mission report should be submitted to the President of the PCBS and the Director General of Statistics Norway not later than three weeks from the last day of mission.

13.9. Duration of the mission

1 ½ week

13.10. Suggested Timing

Starting in PCBS 7. April 1999 and ending 15. April 1999

13.11. Counterparts

The President of the PCBS (or his representative) and the Director General of Statistics Norway (or his representative).

14. Annex 2: Review of Status and Progress

This annex contains a review of the status and progress of activities that fall under the NORAD project. The subjects are taken here in the same order as in the Project Document (1996). There are three main sections: the production of quality statistics, support units funded by overhead, and statistical infrastructure included in the NORAD project.

14.1. Production of Quality Statistics Funded by the NORAD Project

14.1.1. Population and Housing Census Directorate - PHC

Partly funded by NORAD.

20 staff members, DG: Mr. Mahmoud Jaradat.

Technical support: 5/96: Skiri, 11/96: Skiri, Brunborg, 3/97: Skiri, Thomsen, TL¹ 4-5/97: Lyngstad.

PHC - Technical Operations Department.

Partly funded by NORAD, 4 staff members, Head: Ms. Inaya Dawoud.

PHC - Cartography Department

Partly funded by NORAD, 7 staff members, Head: Khalil Motawe.

The PHC was a great success. With the exception of East-Jerusalem where the Israeli authorities stopped the work, the PCBS managed to conduct the census on schedule, process and release the first general report with overall figures within 12 month. This would be considered outstanding even in countries with an established system and previous experience. One might expect a trade-off in quality with this emphasis on speed. The PCBS had a well organised system for quality control including a post enumeration survey and we have no reason to question quality. However, as for any census, only the analytical reports will allow for a final conclusion on quality. An issue for the further publications would be to address the confidentiality issue, considering publishing information only for cells with at least three units. The publication plan aims to fulfil the requirement of the UNFPA, provide information as in neighbouring countries, national needs as identified and will include publications for each governorate.

The publication plan looks very extensive, but the need for a broad set of data at a disaggregated level is especially large for countries building their institutions more or less from scratch.

The census turned out more expensive than planned for. First, the UNFPA budget turned out too small. Then additional funding was needed to strengthen supervision etc. for fieldwork. The additional funding from NORAD turned out not sufficient. Contribution in kind from the PNA was not enough. The additional British funding turned out not to close the gap for field work. In the end an additional gap was closed by seconding staff from all other departments except Area Statistics and by spending resources allocated for analytical reports for the compilation and tabulation process.

¹ TL - Technical support provided by Team Leader.

The PCBS is now in contact with the British DFID to ensure funding for the analytical reports. The PCBS has however been open on the funding issues throughout the process. It should also be added that the allocation of staff from other directorates might have delayed work in those directorates, but this operation has been very useful in ensuring consistency in definitions and practice across PCBS.

In the publication “Population, Housing and Establishment Census – 1997, Census Final Results – Summary (30/11/1998) there is a well written documentation of the main principles and findings. The census will mark a founding pillar in the statistical system in Palestine. The “Summary publication” is in this regard an impressive documentation of the census, filled with crucial information useful for everyone in Palestine. The census and the publication are proofs of the PCBS’s capacity and ability to produce modern and scientific statistical information. Standards and classifications are used in a coherent way.

It is worth noting that this census is ambitious since it includes information about individuals and households, houses and dwellings but also information about establishments. The counting of enterprises is an extension of the housing part of the census. An important task will be to use this census information as “a base-camp” for future statistical registers and useful to the running statistics for future years.

With the current plans for tabulation reports, major user needs will be fulfilled. It is, however, important to ensure that the programme for analytical reports are conducted and if funding from the DFID falls short, reallocation of funds from the NORAD project should be considered.

14.1.2. Population & Social Statistics Directorate - PSSD: Demographic Statistics

Fully funded by NORAD.

5 staff members, Head: Mr. Muhamed Duraidi,

Technical support: TL 8/98 - 8/99: Skiri.

The census can give a cross section description of the population at the time of the census. It is obvious that it is important to understand more of the population’s driving forces than a census can give. The changes in size and composition between census dates should of course also be monitored. A base for this will be a system for demographic statistics built up in close coherence with the system for vital registration and a population register. This is well taken care of in the plans.

Work with the building of such a system is under way and in handouts we have seen estimates of crucial demographic parameters for fertility and mortality and even a population projection model has been run. This is impressive but our impression is that still quite some issues are left to develop before a satisfactory demographic statistical system with close links to the population register has been built.

There is a long list of publications under the theme population, but there still seems to be a lack of updating regular demographic overviews of the demographic trends (mortality, fertility, growth etc.). We have seen results, and work is in progress, but this does not seem enough to bring about regular publications.

“Marriage and Divorce in Palestine Territories 1997” is a publication that is based on data from administrative records, but the data seems not to be a fully integrated part of the system for vital statistics. There are data about marriage and divorce with relevant

background variables as marital status, education and age. There are, however, not any tables with the number of marriages and divorced compared with the relevant “risk population”. This limits the use of the results, since demographic comparisons are impossible.

14.1.3. PST: Gender and Time Use Statistics

Fully funded by NORAD.

4 staff members, Head: Ms. Sana Assi,

Technical support: 1/99: Haraldsen (e-mail), 3/99: Vaage

The Project Document (1996) planned for “A current status report addressing available time use information and planning for data collection”. This plan was never made, but the Gender and Time Use Statistics project has in spite of this been established. At the Directorate for Population and Social Statistics, a special unit for gender statistics has been established. It seems that the gender aspect is taken care of in a lot of projects and publications. In addition a special gender report has been written: “Women and Men in Palestine. Trends & Statistics” PCBS 1998. This report was not financed by the NORAD project. This report seems to be a well-written publication full of crucial information about an important aspect and also with a tasteful layout.

A Time Use Survey has been under planning, and now is it decided this survey should be based upon diary reporting. (Sample size 4 000)

It should also be mentioned that a special unit for child statistics has been established. This underscores the emphasis that is given to various priority groups in the statistical system.

14.1.4. PSSD: Crime Statistics

Fully funded by NORAD.

2 staff members, Head: Mr. Yousef Mousa.

Technical support: 10/98: Otnes.

This theme was included in the Masterplan (1994) and is now one of the NORAD projects. The purpose is both to describe the level of crime and the welfare effect measured as victimisation. Both interview surveys and administrative records may be used as data sources.

The Victimization Survey – 1996 was based on a household sample survey. The survey included variables as follows:

- Type of criminal offence:
- Location,
- Crime reporting,
- Crime executors, and
- Bodily harm and tangible losses of criminal offences.

The results seem to have been published in a fairly well documented way. This will be a permanent running production of statistics. There are two publications:

- Crime and Victimization Statistics in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. PCBS May 1998 and
- Victimization Survey – 1996. Main Findings. May 1997

14.1.5. PSSD: Health Statistics

Fully funded by Norad.

4 staff members, Head: Mr. Mohammed Omari.

Technical support: 12/98: Notkola.

The Masterplan (1994) stated three elements:

- Survey information about health and nutrition status;
- Description of status of health care, death causes and disease based upon administrative records; and
- Census publication for the disabled population.

It was an important part of the strategy to improve the co-operation between the PCBS and the Ministry of Health to secure the use of administrative records. This seems to have been sorted out. There is ongoing work with activities both in hospitals and in the primary health care units. Data have been captured as it was planned, based upon use of administrative records.

To improve statistics of causes of death, one of the more complicated fields of statistics, a NORAD funded expert from Finland has been engaged.

The results from the Health Survey 1996 were published in (1998).

14.1.6. PSSD: Education & Culture Statistics

Fully funded by NORAD for the school year 1998/99.

3 staff members, Head: Mr. Ahmad Abu-Alhija,

Technical Support: None

Education had other financial support to mid-1998 and is now funded by the NORAD project, but just for the 1998/99 school year. A programme of annual school statistics was started in 1998 and annual culture statistics are planned for 1999. For education statistics has started work to also include economic information. Education statistics was the prototype social statistics to utilise administrative records and to establish a long-term working relation with the line ministry.

Education statistics fits very well into the NORAD project approach of institutional co-operation and development of a system, which allows for utilisation of administrative records. If economic resources allow, it is well justified to fund this within the NORAD project also for the coming years.

14.1.7. Area Statistics Directorate - ASD: Environmental and Natural Resource Statistics and Energy Statistics

These two initial project components formed the basis for the major part of the Area Statistics Directorate and have been developed into several departments. Initially two departments, Environmental and Natural Resource Statistics and Energy Statistics carried out the work. Hence, even the technical support was provided for these two only for the first years, while in 1998 and 1999 seven departments conduct the work on these subjects. They are presented below.

14.1.8. ASD: Environmental Statistics

- Fully funded by NORAD.
- 5 staff members, Head: Ms. Ma'ather Sawalha.
- Technical support: 6/96: Homstvedt, Moss, 11/96: Moss, 6/97: Homstvedt, Moss, TL 4-5/97: Lyngstad, 3/98: Moss, TL 10/97-3/98: Falnes, TL 4-12/98 Lyngstad.

Besides the work on a current status report (Area Statistics in the Palestine Territory, 1998) and the draft Sub-Masterplan for Area Statistics (1998), a continuous programme of annual production of environmental statistics has been prepared, by producing and publishing both an industrial environmental survey and a household environmental survey for 1998. The data for both these publications are collected in a very efficient way by smaller survey modules piggybacked to established survey programmes. It is planned to collect information for 1999 in another season and evaluate these two rounds before designing a continuous program. Environmental statistics is also working on a local community survey, which is planned to collect information from local authorities and institutions.

With technical support the work has started in a number of sub-areas based upon information from a number of sources. As it is outlined in the draft Sub-Masterplan for Area Statistics (1998) there are still some sub-areas and data sources to be included.

Some of the important user needs are still not fully satisfied, technical support will be needed for some time.

14.1.8.1. ASD: Land Use Statistics

Fully funded by NORAD.

2 staff members, Head: Ms. Amal Jabr.

Technical support: 5/98: Sæbø, 10/98 Schønning, TL 4-12/98 Lyngstad, TL 3/99 - > Schønning.

Jointly with environmental and natural resource statistics a current status report called Area Statistics in the Palestine Territory (1998) is published. An unpublished Sub-Masterplan for Area Statistics (1998) has been written. Land use was and is an area where a number of Palestinian institutions are working but as we see it without a sufficient co-ordination. Hence, the main emphasis has been to build co-operation and work towards a standard classification system for the GIS and for land use. The work programme in the PCBS reflects this. Currently work is going on with

- a survey on institutional capability on land use and the GIS,
- a land use register,
- establishing a classification system for land use, and
- a current status report specifically on land use.

With technical support from the project the PCBS has focused on institutional co-operation both by a PCBS seminar for other Palestinian institutions, the institutional survey and the classification system of land use which are accepted and supported by other institutions. Given the difficulties to co-ordinate the work this is a major achievement.

While some user needs are fulfilled, in order to fulfil the wide range of user needs, the PCBS still has a way to go in order to establish a permanent system. Such as system will start by collection of land use information without using a GIS system, continue with data from lower units utilising the current work in the Geographical Information Department and finally move to GIS based information. This will require further technical support not only to the end of the project period, but for quite some time.

14.1.8.2.ASD: Natural Resource Statistics

Fully funded by NORAD.

2 staff members, Head: Ms. Hadeel A. Zeidan.

Technical support: TL 4-12/98: Lyngstad, TL 3/99 ->: Schønning.

This department emerged from environmental statistics and the staff participated in the common work. The department is still at a very early stage, but are already busy with a survey on water consumption scheduled for mid-99. At this stage this department looks a little like the little sister of environmental statistics, well under way with one of the tasks, but still quite a number of sub-sectors and data sources are to be worked out. One of the important, but also difficult and sensitive areas is statistics of water resources. Here the need to build up expertise is a must.

In this area, user needs are not satisfactory covered and the PCBS will probably need technical support for years to come, before they will have an established and permanent programme that covers the necessary areas.

14.1.9. ASD: Energy Statistics (incl. initial support to Transport Statistics)

- Fully funded by NORAD.
- 2 staff members, Head: Mr. Ayman Abu-Aisheh.
- Technical support: TL 10/97-3/98: Falnes, 3/98: Bøeng.

The Energy Department has worked closely with the departments, which grew out of environment statistics and participated in the current status report, Area Statistics in the Palestine Territory (1998) and the Sub-Masterplan for Area Statistics (1998). The department is about to publish a separate Current Status Report on energy statistics. They have started a program of annual reports on energy consumption based upon information from other sources in the PCBS, such as economic production surveys, foreign trade statistics and household consumption surveys. There are some data gaps, but the report utilises what is available and provides substantial information. In 1999 two energy surveys will be conducted, one attached to the labor force surveys and one to the economic surveys. The next step is to start collecting data for energy production and to work on a methodological report on the energy balance.

While the PCBS already has achieved to fulfil some user needs for energy statistics, there is still need for technical support in the coming years in order to establish a permanent programme covering the necessary areas.

14.1.9.1. Initial Transport Statistics

Initial funding provided within Environmental Statistics under the NORAD project.

Technical support: 5/98: Forssén.

Environmental statistics and energy statistics both need input from various other statistical sectors. Hence, it was decided to provide financial and technical support to ensure that transport statistics was initiated. The support assisted the PCBS to get a continuous programme of annual transport surveys established and this survey now feeds into environmental statistics and energy statistics as planned.

14.1.10. ASD: Housing and Housing Conditions Statistics

Fully funded by NORAD.

Head: Mr. Mahmoud Abduhl Rahman.

Technical support: 8/98-8/99: Skiri.

A Current Status Report on housing conditions was produced by the end of 1997 with ad hoc support by Sida. A separate department has been established and is funded by the NORAD project. The focus was first on ad hoc survey first under the umbrella of the demographic survey and then under the census. While now working on the census information the emphasis is also on how to establish and up-date a housing and building register (refer to a separate section) with support from the Norwegian register expert. They have already established a good working relationship with the Ministry of Local Government and the building license authorities in the municipality. It is still quite a way to go, but if they manage to give a contribution to facilitate a central approach and data exchange towards the local authorities, this is a major achievement.

14.1.11. Information System & Computer Directorate - ISD: Geographical Information Department

Funded by overhead and project allocations, partly from NORAD.

3 staff members, Head: Ms. Taghrid Hithnawi Salah.

Technical support: Sharing technical support with Land Use: 5/98: Sæbø, 10/98 Schøning, TL 4-12/98 Lyngstad, TL 3/99 - > Schøning.

The work on maps and the GIS is shared between this department and the PHCD: Cartography Department at the service side and the ASD: Land Use Department from the user side. So far they have succeeded in reaching an agreement of division of labour which avoids overlapping and gaps, but there seems to be some tense and improved co-operation will be of mutual interest.

The Geographical Information Department is now focusing on a production system for statistical maps that seems to progress very well. This system will allow for statistical maps down to enumeration area level and a system of regular production of statistics on maps and geographical area of any size. The department is already producing informative statistical maps at directorate level and the full system will be ready by next year.

The process of digitising very detailed Census maps for certain areas with detailed information in different layers as for buildings and roads has been tested. The road layer has already served as a base to establish road maps and then initiated a co-operation with local authorities to name streets and number buildings, down to name and number plates in four cities.

A full coverage of Palestine will, however, require about 12 staff years and computer equipment. If the purpose solely was to update the Census maps, one might well

choose to wait some years, but with a complete lack of detailed maps in Palestine the mid-term review team finds it well justified from a professional point of view.

While this obviously should be given second priority to a system for statistical maps, it would be worthwhile to consider it for a possible second phase of the NORAD project, or even already in 2000 if there are available resources and the system of statistical maps is finalised.

14.2. Support Units Funded by Overhead

14.2.1. Survey and Field Work

Funded by overhead and project allocations, partly from NORAD.

32 staff members, 50 permanent field officers/workers, and temporary field workers, Head: Mr. Raed Samara.

Technical support: None

The Survey and Field Work unit serves like a directorate and was the engine to establish the PCBS. Over the years a well functioning survey organisation has been developed with support from a number of sources. This is a major achievement. In the long run it might turn out to be even more important for an efficient production of statistics. This can eventually be done by establishing a central system for collection and utilisation of administrative records. Some of the data editing functions could also be included in this part of the organisation. This is an area where study trips and technical assistance visits are essential..

14.2.2. Information Systems & Computer Directorate - ISD

Funded by overhead and project allocations, partly from Norad.

DG: Mr. Nazmi Harb.

Technical support: None

ISD: System Development Department

9 staff members, Technical support: none.

ISD: Technical Support Department

6 staff members, Head: Mostafa Abu-Giezzan, Technical support: none.

ISD: Dissemination and Documentation Department

4 staff-members, Head: Jal Hab, Technical support: none.

The PCBS has succeed in establishing a well functioning information technology system serving the current data capturing, compilation, analysis and dissemination process. They have managed within these few years to develop the capacity and establish the system to handle large data sets from the census and other sources in a data base approach similar to other NSIs. The have a well established user service or technical support department operating the servers, the network and assisting subject matter staff to utilise office software and statistical software.

There is, however, a felt need to move on to other tasks including, but not limited to, production of well documented analysis files, dissemination of aggregated data by electronic means, utilising improved data entry software, data base management, and switching to new LAN software.

The newly established department on dissemination seems to be well staffed from an information technology point of view and the challenge will be to develop an overall dissemination strategy also utilising statistical expertise, presentation expertise and journalistic expertise. The planned visit on overall dissemination strategy by an expert from Statistics Norway should provide an important input to the development of such a strategy but it is likely that study trips and technical support are needed in the years to come. Refer also to a separate paragraph on dissemination.

14.3. Statistical Infrastructure included in the Norad Project

14.3.1. PSSD: Central Register Department (including Initial Register Files)

Fully funded by Norad.

5 staff members, Head: Mr. Sufian Abu-Harb.

Technical support: 11/97: Skiri, Vik, TL 10/97-3/98: Falnes, TL 4-12/98: Lyngstad, 8/98-8/99: Skiri, 3/99 Samuelson.

14.3.1.1. Population Registers

A modern statistical system for vital statistics and migration has to be based upon a population register. Such a population register should be based upon a system for civil vital registration, which is to be regarded as an administrative register. The system for vital registration and its legal base should take account of the statistical needs. This system for vital registration seems at present in Palestine to cover basic demographic incidents as births (fertility) and deaths (mortality). The Ministry of Interior (MOI) seems now to receive an improved portion of the original records.

The situation as regards the other components as marriage/divorce and especially migration seems to be more vague. Data for the publication "Marriage and Divorce in Palestine Territories – 1997" (December 1998) is said to be collected from administrative records from the Ministry of Waqf and Religious Affairs and Palestinian Shariah and Church Courts.

It is work going on with the design of the so-called "Statistical Register" and the necessary updating routines. The computer work will, however, start later in the year 1999.

The basic population register is still dependent on co-operation with the population register in Israel. Normally the relevant register files are received from Israel but improvements (pace) are still wanted.

Under the NORAD programme important activities have taken place, recently by one of the long-term consultants. This work has both been directed towards the internal organisation of the register files and also towards the legal problems as regards the new Act on vital registration.

14.3.1.2. Establishment and Enterprise Register

The work with the first prototype for statistical use has been in progress based upon the establishment censuses. The report says that work is going on with the implementation of the systems agreed upon on maintenance and updating. This seems, however, to lack a solid base in a system of administrative routines. This is in our

opinion necessary for an updating of legal units in the business register. This updating is crucial for the quality of the register and its potential for statistical use.

It should also be made clear what ambitions that is realistic for the detailed information about the enterprise level that can be extracted from administrative records, Further it should also be established a strategy for how the enterprises eventually could be divided into several establishments or local kind of activity units. Information about institutional sector should also be included..

One task should be to examine the possibilities for establishing some administrative routines that can form the base for an administrative register of legal units etc. that is enterprise level. Such administrative routines can possibly be sought in the tax systems (VAT) etc.

14.3.1.3. Farm registers

Given the limited information at farm level, a real farm register is rather something to be approached after a possible agricultural census. It is however important to establish a statistical register of farm holders which might serve as a sample frame for an agricultural survey. This work is coming ahead and with the planned updating of information on large farms, it might serve this purpose.

14.3.1.4. Building and Housing Unit Register

The strategy for updating of the building and housing unit register seems to be based upon the building licenses for new buildings. This is a promising strategy but quite some work lays ahead. The coverage is still short, and quite some methodological work is needed. The building license registers are not consistent with a building and housing unit register. Building licenses includes licenses for both new buildings and extensions. Quite some people prefer to build without a license and rather receive a warning and accept a fee. Building licenses do not include information at housing unit level. In addition there are severe problems with identification of buildings, regional position and data quality.

14.3.1.5. Confidentiality

The issue is a general concern. The census information was collected based upon the Draft Statistical Law and according to the advice given by the legal expert Mr. Samuelson, the legal base is limited. There is a legal base for utilising census information for statistical purposes including statistical registers, but not for administrative register purposes outside PCBS.

14.3.2. Administrative records

One of the basic principles for data capture for a national statistical institute is to use administrative records for statistical purposes, when such records are available. This idea is well worked out in the early planning documents. Still, however, the concept and content of the relevant administrative records are a little vague, but it seems to be a common concept that is used both for aggregated information that are collected from the decentralised public sector (local or governmental) and micro data.

It is important to further develop and cultivate this concept, and a complete list of records with content and definitions etc. should be established as soon as possible.

One question will be if the work with the use of administrative records as a source for statistics is sufficiently co-ordinated with the political and administrative work with the political programme or official project that creates the origin of the administrative records. It is wise to advice on patience, and the work with such systems is tedious work that will last for many years.

At present these records are collected by the central field service unit – this seems to be a wise strategy.

This strategy gives a potential for further co-ordination not only of data capture but also of the content (definitions of variables). A common database for entry of administrative records seems to be a natural technical solution.

14.3.3. PHCD: Methods & Standard Department

Fully funded by Norad.

4 staff members, Head: Mr. Hasan Abu-Hasan.

Technical support: 3/98: Thomsen.

One general impression is that there in the PCBS is an overall general understanding of the basic methodological challenges that face a statistical bureau.

The PCBS conducts several surveys based on samples. The census is used as a base for the sample frames. The PCBS has chosen a strategy with several sample frames. This can reduce the possibilities for comparison but the solution has other advantages.

In some of the sample survey publications there are well written introductory remarks about sample methods, estimation and variance. This is for example relevant for the labour force survey. One could, however, comment on the fact that the publication has not yet included estimates of total number of employed etc. but is restricted to frequency distributions.

Editing and quality are important parts of the work to secure quality of the statistics. The work is, however, resource demanding and the positive effects on quality should be compared with the resources needed. In many NSIs the work with editing and quality control is decentralised and it is sometimes problematic to establish a common understanding and practice. In the PCBS it is worth mentioning that The Field Organisation plays an active role in data capturing for several surveys and this should be taken advantage of by including some editing in the tasks covered by the Field Organisation.

14.3.4. Training Centre

The training centre was initially established with the purpose of offering statistical training to organisations other than PCBS. It has however developed a broad set of training packages for the PCBS staff, including subject matter statistics, information technology and administrative issues. The training centre is still also aiming to develop a more comprehensive training package to be delivered in co-operation with a university. The mission would like to underscore the importance of a well functioning training unit and suggests to consider extended support for years to come.

14.3.5. Management

Technical support: 8/98: Longva, 12/98 Longva

14.3.6. Twinning Technical Support:

Project planning: 1/96: Wold, Brunborg, Homstvedt, Simpson, 5-6/96: Homstvedt, Wold, Johansson

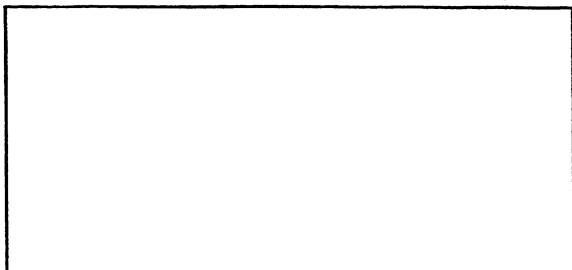
Overall twinning co-operation: 9/96: Wold, 11/96: Wold, 3/97: Wold, Lyngstad, Falnes, 6/98: Longva, TL Lyngstad, 2/99: Wold, Lyngstad.

Team Leaders: 4-5 & 8-9/97: Lyngstad, 6-7/97: Thomsen, 10/97-3/98: Falnes, 4-12/98: Lyngstad, 3 ->: Schøning.

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Tillatelse nr.
159 000/502

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ISSN 0805-9411



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