

CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY
TWENTY-EIGHTH MEETING OF THE
STANDING COMMITTEE OF
CARIBBEAN STATISTICIANS

SECRETARIAT

RESTRICTED

SCCS/2003/28/33

Providenciales, Turks and Caicos Islands
3-5 November 2003

5 November 2003

TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS COUNTRY REPORT

Attached for the attention of the Meeting is Paper entitled Turks and Caicos Islands Country Report.

TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS

STATISTICAL OFFICE

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC PLANNING AND STATISTICS

COUNTRY REPORT

PRESENTED TO THE TWENTY-EIGHT MEETING

OF THE

STANDING COMMITTEE OF CARIBBEAN STATISTICIANS

*Providenciales, Turks & Caicos Islands,
3rd-5th November, 2003*

PROGRESS REPORT FOR THE PERIOD OCTOBER 2002 – OCTOBER 2003

Background

The Consultancy for the Institutional Strengthening of Statistical Services Project (ISSSP) by which the Turks and Caicos Islands Statistical Office was re-established entered its Final Year in 2003. The project came to an end on the 30th September 2003. The position of Government Statistician became vacant in January 2003 and remains to be filled. In the circumstance, the Consultant Statistician has assumed the administrative responsibilities of the Government Statistician and has agreed to extension of contract to December 2003, while suitable recruitment into the new position of Chief Statistician takes place.

The 2003 programme of statistical activities focused on the finalization and completion for publication of statistical reports; the documentation of methodologies and planning for the continuation of the statistical programme. The only developmental work undertaken in the final year has been the preparation of Production Account estimates for the National Accounts.

During the second Quarter 2003 advertisements were placed in regional newspapers for the positions of Chief Statistician, Statistician (2) and Statistical Programmer /Analyst. Interviews were conducted in May 2003. These interviews resulted in the recruitment on contract of a Guyanese and a Jamaican national into the positions of Statistician. The two statisticians were at the time of their recruitment employed with their country's Statistical administration. The Statisticians assumed duties in July 2003.

A Trinidad and Tobago national was recruited into the position of Statistical Programmer/Analyst. The Officer assumed duties but was unwilling to continue and left. The post remains to be filled. Unfortunately, no suitable persons were able to be identified for the important position of Chief Statistician. The Department of Economic Planning and Statistics seeks an experienced professional to fill that position.

As already mentioned above, activities in 2003 centered around the finalization of reports for publication and dissemination and the completion of the production accounts of the System of National Accounts. Statistical activities undertaken during the course of the project had resulted in the collection, collation and compilation of statistics, which with a concentration of effort and time towards editing and presentation could return statistical reports for dissemination. The decision was taken to prepare at the same time manuals documenting the processes leading to the preparation of reports throughout all stages, as a permanent record that should guarantee the sustainability of the exercise under consideration.

STATISTICAL PUBLICATIONS AND METHODOLOGIES

Yearbook of Statistics 2000

A major effort was taken to complete the Yearbook of Statistics as the first publication output by the re-established statistical service. The last publication released before the disintegration of statistical activities contained data up to 1995. Through an intensive data collection exercise, an effort was made to bridge data series from 1995 to 2000, the year of the publication wherever possible. For some statistical series, changes in format or the loss of data records did not allow this to happen.

Final Edit of the Tables and Charts for the Yearbook of Statistics 2000 were completed by the middle of February. Appendices, Notes and Methodology, Table of Contents, Foreword and Introduction were also completed, as well as the graphic design of the cover. The Yearbook of Statistics was converted to PDF format and will be published on CD for data dissemination as well.

TCI Quick Facts and Figures

The completion of the Yearbook of Statistics has allowed a derived publication to be completed and prepared that is the “TCI Quick Facts and Figures” which is a quick reference highlighting in summary format the key statistics that are available on the Turks and Caicos Islands. The publication reported data for 2000, 2001 and 2002 where available.

Tourism Statistics

In June 2002, the Statistical Office in collaboration with the Tourist Board conducted the second in a new series of Surveys of Departing Visitors (SoDV). The editing coding and data entry were completed by December 2002. The first exercise done in December 2001 was a pilot of the logistics and the data processing. Following the pilot exercise amendments were made to the questionnaire, survey logistics and the data processing methodology.

Work started in earnest during the first quarter on the preparation of a Survey Report. The Tabulation plan was finalized and processing of tables was undertaken using SPSS application. The development of the tabulation plan was influenced by an earlier report done in 1998/99 by the Caribbean Tourism Organisation, in collaboration with the Turks and Caicos Tourist Board and also by reference to similar regional reports.

The SoDV Report includes statistical tables on the profile and behaviour of visitors as well as estimates of visitor expenditure. The Final Draft of the Survey of Departing Visitors Report June 2002 including Notes and Methodology and Data Highlights has been completed and will be reviewed with the Turks and Caicos Islands Tourist Board who are partners in the project. The Tourist Board has indicated that it is their intention to publish the report on their web site.

Government Statistics Report

On the assumption of duties of two regional statisticians in July 2003, work commenced on the preparation of a Government Statistics Report. The report which covers the fiscal period 1999/2000 - 2002/2003 was formatted in accordance with the classification systems recommended by the IMF in the latest revision of the Government Finance Statistics Manual. The report will also include Value Added estimates for the General Government Sector. A Draft of the report has been prepared for display at the 28th Meeting of the SCCS. The final report should also include estimates of Government Final Consumption Expenditure for the period. To facilitate the preparation of the report, a correlation table relating the accounts of the Turks and Caicos Islands Government's Chart of Accounts to the Classification System of the Government Finance statistics Manual was developed. That correlation table is regularly reviewed to ensure proper re-classification of Government Revenue and Expenditure transactions.

Documentation of Methodologies

A Manual on the Survey of Departing Visitors has been drafted. This Manual documents all stages of the methodology and procedures that were followed for

1. the conduct of the Survey of Departing Visitors
2. The manual editing and coding and computer processing of the data and
3. the preparation of the Survey Report

This Manual would serve as the reference document for all persons who have responsibility for activities on this schedule.

A Manual on the processing of Trade Statistics has also been drafted. This manual provides step-by-step instructions on the actions to be performed for

1. the transfer of the data file containing ASYCUDA Declarations into the EUROTRACE application
2. The treatments needed to create a clean data file
3. The update of the Eurotrace

To ensure that production of the Yearbook of Statistics continues without interruption in the future, a Manual describing in detail the stages of production will be drafted. A standard Template was prepared to record detailed information on each table including Source of Data, Table Formats, Unit of Measurement etc. This manual will be completed by November 30, 2003.

Establishment of a Branch Office of DEPS in Providenciales

The exercise to compile Production Account Estimates for the Turks and Caicos Islands highlighted the need for a branch office of the Department of Economic Planning and Statistics in Providenciales, which is the commercial capital. This Office was opened in the 2nd week of February 2003. The Statistical Surveys Officer mans the Branch Office and has been involved in the collection of data from business establishments for the Survey of Business Establishments. The Officer also does the extraction of data from returns collected and has been assisting with the preparation of Value Added estimates for selected sectors.

National Accounts/Business Surveys

The Survey of Establishments received a boost in August 2002, with the recruitment of a Statistical Surveys Officer (SSO). The SSO is a TCI National who has recently graduated with an Associate Degree in Business, with a major in accounting. The officer has been dedicated to the collection of data from those establishments selected for the Annual Survey of Establishments (ASE).

Response to the Survey of Establishments has been very poor. In the absence of statistical legislation the Business Establishments remain distrustful of departmental guarantees of confidentiality. Further, the jurisdiction is a tax-free jurisdiction with no tradition of form filling or responding to survey inquiries. A special promotional brochure providing answers to Frequently Asked Questions has been prepared to market the survey.

The Statistical Office has nevertheless persisted despite the general unwillingness of the business community to cooperate and we are already having some successes. For the estimation of the production accounts a few sectors of the Turks and Caicos Islands Standard Industrial Classification (TCISIC) have been targeted for special attention in the Survey of Business Establishments. The selected sectors are Tourism, Banking and Insurance, Government Construction, Wholesale and Retail Distribution, Bulk Distribution of Gas, Electricity and Water, Fish Processors, and Fishing and Fish Farming, which are believed to be the principal economic activity sectors.

Methodologies were developed for estimating each sector's contribution to Gross Domestic Product using the very limited data extracted from the returns.

The Statistical Surveys Officer attended a regional seminar/workshop on the National Accounts in St. Kitts/ Nevis from 11th November '02 – 6th December, '02. The two newly recruited statisticians have been assigned responsibility for preparing the value added estimates for selected sectors. Neither of the two statisticians have been trained in National Accounts nor have they worked in the subject area before. Given this situation the production of National Accounts cannot be sustained. It is therefore imperative that special training programmes be identified or trainers brought to the island to provide the necessary training for the three officers currently working on the National Accounts.

Population And Housing Census 2001

The Preliminary Report on the Population and Housing Census 2001, which was prepared and submitted to the Executive Council during the last quarter 2002 was revised following revisions to the base data file and re-submitted to the Executive Council for approval to release. The corrections to the data file resulted in a lower estimate of the population total.

The Statistical Office responded to several 'Requests for Data' involving statistics based on the Population and Housing Census. The Statistical Office is currently awaiting the approval of the Executive Council before the Census results can be released to the public. This approval is expected to be received by 30th November, 2003.

The Statistical Office has been receiving assistance from Mr. Serge Poulard of CELADE, Chile with the development of an intranet by which means the census data will be disseminated.

PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE PERIOD OCTOBER. 2003 – OCTOBER 2004

As mentioned above, the consultancy re: the Institutional Strengthening of Statistical Services ends in December 2003. The position of Chief Statistician still remains to be filled. The programme of work outlined below is therefore tentative as the incoming Chief Statistician should be allowed the flexibility to amend the work programme as (s)he sees fit.

Given the early stage of development of the TCI Office and the learning curve that the staff is now on-going, the consultant advocates that there be no major expansion of the statistical programme until the sustainability of the present programme of activities is guaranteed.

The existing areas of work will therefore continue and be updated. Systems that have not yet been documented should be documented to ensure continuity for the long term.

Yearbook of Statistics

The compilation of the Yearbook of Statistics provides a great opportunity for training and exposure of staff to data sources. Two officers have already benefited from that exposure in the case of the 2000 and 2002 editions of the yearbook. In a similar fashion, the compilation successor volumes should be rotated among staff.

The derived publication “Quick Facts and Figures” will continue to be produced immediately following the release of the Annual report.

Trade Statistics

The preparation of a Trade Statistics Report was always one of the goals of the consultancy. Unfortunately it has not been realized. Technical Issues relating to the processing of the data are yet to be resolved. Once resolved, the compilation and publication of the Trade Statistics Report should be realized.

Business Statistics

The Central Business register will be updated in 2004 with information from the Register of the Business Licencing Division. The Survey of Business Establishments (SoBE) will be expanded and a greater effort will be made to increase the response rate and to maintain response from all those establishments which have responded previously.

National Accounts

The first attempt at preparing Estimates of Value Added by Kind of Economic Activity in 2003 was most instructive. Following a post-mortem of the exercise areas for improvement were identified.

Since it was not possible to prepare estimates for all sectors of the economy, the major contributors to GDP were targeted for data collection and estimation. During 2004, the Value Added estimates of these sectors will be revised and updated and new sectors will be considered for estimation. An effort will be made to estimate Government Final Consumption Expenditure and Gross Fixed Capital Formation.

Government Revenue and Expenditure

A Government Finance Statistics Report was published for the period 1999-2002. The Report would be expanded with the information on the General Government Sector as defined in the System of National Accounts 93.

Vital Statistics

Initial work was started on the development of Vital Statistics with the formation of the Vital Statistics Committee which involved cooperation between the Medical Records Section, the Registrar of Births and Deaths and the Statistical Office.