

Turks & Caicos Islands

Country Report

PROGRESS REPORT FOR THE PERIOD NOVEMBER 2003 - NOVEMBER 2004**Overview:**

Subsequent to the re-establishment of the Turks and Caicos Islands Statistical Office by the Consultancy for the Institutional Strengthening of Statistical Services Project (ISSSP), which came to an end on the 30th September 2003, the Office has undergone some changes and challenges. There was the departure of the Consultant Statistician in December of 2003; the position of Government/Chief Statistician, which became vacant since January 2003 remains to be filled by a suitable replacement; and a budgetary allocation, was made for the recruitment of a Deputy Chief Statistician, a position which also remains vacant. Both of these positions were advertised locally and regionally but to date no suitable person was found for either and hence these positions remain temporarily vacant, though efforts are in place to have them filled as earliest as February/March 2005. The Department of Economic Planning and Statistics seeks experienced and qualified professional to fill these key positions.

During the second quarter of 2004 the Statistical Survey Officer left the Providenciales Annex (which is in the commercial capital) to pursue undergraduate studies abroad leaving this position, as well as the office, vacant to date. This has definitely affected some of the work programme as this Officer had special responsibility for the collection of data for the Survey of Business Establishments. This Officer also did the extraction of data from returns collected and has been assisting with the preparation of Value Added estimates for selected sectors. These have now become areas of needs for the Statistical Office.

The above staffing constraint has now left the office with a balance of six (6) members: two (2) Statisticians (one each with economic and social statistics responsibility), three (3) Statistical Technicians and one (1) Mapping Technician.

The 2004 programme of statistical activities focused mainly on the: sustainability of the office, especially operating without a supervisory head, finalization and completion of statistical reports for publication and dissemination, the implementation of the planned programme for 2004, documentation of methodologies, establishment of the foundation for broadening the existing areas of statistics and on mapping the continuation of the statistical

programme, especially under the staffing constraints experienced. Nonetheless, both the social and economic statistics sections have seen much progress in this reporting year.

There has been improved collaboration and cooperation between some agencies/offices and the Statistical Unit. Although all the reports/outputs of the Office are not printed for dissemination, they are however all available in PDF format on CDs for this purpose.

With the expansion of the time series of data and the type and kind of data compiled by the Statistical Office there has been a marked increase in the number and variety of data requests from private citizens and businesses, students and academicians, government offices and departments and in some instances persons from regional businesses or international organizations. Notwithstanding, there can still be improved use by the policy makers, in particular, of the data produced by the Office.

ECONOMIC STATISTICS FRAMEWORK

➤ National Accounts

The first attempt at preparing estimates of Value Added by Kind of Economic Activity in 2003 was most instructive. 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 were revised and updated and new sectors were considered for estimation, for example, Insurance as part of the Banking and Insurance sector, Health and Education. However, not much progress was made due to lack of data from the unanswered questionnaires. An effort will be made to estimate Government Final Consumption Expenditure and Gross Fixed Capital Formation.

Data was collected from those establishments selected for the Annual Survey of Establishments (ASE). Response to the Survey of Establishments has been very poor in some sectors whereas others had reasonable coverage. In the absence of statistical legislation the Business Establishments remain distrustful of departmental guarantees of confidentiality despite a tax-free jurisdiction and a promotional brochure providing on the SoBE.

The persistence of the Statistical Office with the SoBE, despite the general unwillingness of the business community to cooperate, or the meager data collected, has led to the bulletin using the methodology developed for computing the value added estimates and imposing calculations of indices for the sectors' constant price estimates of the production accounts a few sectors of the Turks and Caicos Islands Standard Industrial Classification (TCISIC). 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 viewed as the principal sectors of economic activity.

The Economic Statistician has been assigned responsibility for preparing the bulletin on National Accounts from 2000-2002 using the value added estimates for selected sectors calculated by the other two assigned staff members who rendered assistance in this area.

The National Accounts section is currently working on the current and constant price figures for 2003 and revisions to the series 2000-2002. During the past years the production of timely estimates was again hampered by late submissions of information from the SoBE where some sector had 100 percent response rate and others with response rate as low as 10 percent. It is intended that for the remaining part of the year, the Section's primary focus will be that of updating the registers for the 2003 surveys and completion of the 2000-2002 estimates. Questionnaires will be sent out to establishments for 2004 information and work will be started on 2004 estimates. However, this will all be done without a fully updated Business register. The Statistical Office usually has to make frequent follow up calls, assist establishments with filling out the questionnaires, and also clarify any questionable data.

This is indeed an area of concern and need if there is to be sustainability. It is therefore imperative that special training programmes be identified or trainers brought to the island to provide the necessary training of staff in this area.

➤ [Trade Statistics](#)

This is indeed one of the areas of great improvement since the last reporting period. The technical issues relating to the processing of the trade data were resolved with the attachment of a Consultant over a one-week period in November 2004. The Economic Statistician was, at the same time, trained in the use of the EUROTRACE software and a Statistical Technician was recruited to assist with maintaining the Trade database and assist

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with Trade Statistics reporting. This Officer was also guided by the Manual on Processing Trade Statistics that was prepared last year and even made amendments to the manual after

Once all the kinks were resolved, the compilation and publication of an External Trade Report for 1999-2003 was realized in July 2004 with coverage on the “General System” of trade as defined by the UN Statistical Office. The data obtained is first recorded under the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS) 1996 version but subsequently converted on a one to one relationship to the SITC Revision 3. This Trade report highlights and also contains detailed analyses of values, by country of origin and destination of imports, by SITC (Revision 3) sections, exports, re-exports, balance of visible/merchandise trade, trading blocks and End-Use Classification.

In addition, monthly bulletins on Trade Statistics are currently being prepared for 2004. The Trade database therefore has data from 1999 to current. This is also one of the areas where there is mutual cooperation between the collaborative agencies: Customs Department - for electronically supplying a monthly basis the customs based trade statistics file of customs declarations extracted from the ASYCUDA software, and the Statistical Office for its processing (queries, checks, etc.), tabulation and database maintenance in EUROTRACE. This is indeed a remarkable improvement for the Statistical Office.

➤ OTHER AREAS OF ECONOMIC STATISTICS

Tourism Statistics

Since the 2002 Survey of Departing Visitors for which the report is completed, no other was done until June 2004 for which the data is currently being edited and entered into the computer for processing. This process is expected to be completed by December, 2004. A report should follow shortly thereafter. There were amendments to the questionnaire and execution of the survey recently conducted. The Survey Officers were guided by the Manual on the Survey of Departing Visitors, which was prepared after the first survey. An arrangement was made between the Statistical Office and the Tourist Board for quarterly surveys to be done. However, in the near future, due to staffing constraints, only bi-annual (possibly one survey each for the peak and off peak seasons) surveys can be executed. Basic tourism data, nonetheless, is available from the Tourist Board in the interim periods.

Business (Establishment) Statistics

Progress has been made with the Central Business Register (CBR) to update it with information from the Register of the Business Licencing Division. This should form the sampling frame for the next round of the Survey of Business Establishments (SoBE).

However, the Business Licencing Division experienced problems in its extraction file to be submitted to the Statistical Office. As such, another source had to be sought - the Financial Services Commission - which also experienced technical problems and therefore resulted in the CBR not being fully updated. The hope is for all the problems to be sorted and the register be updated by December 2004 with information on 2003. The Section is currently involved in follow up calls to both the Revenue Control Unit and the Financial Services Commission. The plan is to have the Central Business Register an ongoing activity in the Statistical Office, as it is a source for the functioning of other areas

Government Finance Statistics (GFS)

The Government Finance Statistics database was updated to the 2003/2004 fiscal year's data. A report with additional descriptive analysis was published updating the existing report. The data obtained from GFS feeds to the General Government Sector as defined in the System of National Accounts 93. There is close and timely collaboration with the Audit Office who supplies the data needed for these tasks.

The GFS database now has data covering the fiscal period 1999/2000 - 2003/2004. The output tables were formatted in accordance with the classification systems recommended by the IMF in the latest revision of the Government Finance Statistics Manual. The report also includes Value Added estimates for the General Government Sector. Government Final Consumption Expenditure for the period still needs to be worked on. The correlation table that was developed is regularly reviewed to ensure proper re-classification of Government Revenue and Expenditure transactions.

Annual reports would now be prepared for the TCI on Government Finance Statistics.

SOCIAL/GENDER STATISTICS

- **General Progress of Work on Social Statistics - the compilation and submission of core/MDG statistics and indicators and the operations of the SIMDG**

Social Statistics

The Legislative Council has approved the formation of the National SIMDG Committee. However, the actual committee (for which a customized list tailored for offices within the Turks & Caicos) has not been formed as the Department is without a Chief Statistician to chair the committee or offer technical assistance. In the interim the Social Statistician was responsible to obtain as much data as possible, which was used to produce a report called "Social Indicators 2003 Trends and Statistics". It contains data from 1998 to 2003 or any year within this period for which data was available (for example, from the Population and Housing Census which is a credible source for year 2001 data). It covered areas such as: Population, Households & Families, Work, Economy, Education, Health, Crime, Decision Making and Information and Communication Technology. Nonetheless, and without the Statistical Act and the National SIMDG Committee, this report has indeed laid the foundation for any other addition to the social statistics programme.

The data that was obtained and compiled in-house for this publication was channeled to the CARICOM Secretariat for checking as was available and it is envisioned that this process will continue as more data becomes available to add to the existing table formats and database. The Secretariat offered any assistance, technical or otherwise, when needed.

In addition to the compilation of a social statistics database and the production of a social statistics report, the methodology files for these are also in the process. Currently, the **metadata for social and gender statistics** is being compiled to aid with the sustainability of the programme.

Vital Statistics

In addition to the above remarkable progress made, improvement was also made in Vital Statistics collation, compilation and reporting. There is continued cooperation between the Medical Records Section, the Registrar of Births and Deaths, The Registrar of the Supreme

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Court and the Statistical Office to sustain the vital statistics database. Thus far, the Vital Statistics database has information on births, deaths, marriages and divorces for the years 1970, 1980, and from 1990 to 2003. Through an intensive data collection exercise, an effort was made to bridge data series from what was available prior to the disintegration of statistical activities to 2003 and to report in a more detailed format covering a broader statistical series wherever possible in this first publication. These sixteen (16) years of data indeed entailed an exhaustive data extraction process of the information from administrative records as most of these records are not in a format for easy data retrieval and there is still the issue of a manual system of data storage at these offices. A report on Vital Statistics was produced in May 2004 covering these four areas and the above time series with basic descriptive analyses (short text modules, tables and charts). Data for 2004 will soon be collated and a vital statistics report will now be prepared annually. With increased cooperation and staffing needs met, it is envisioned that at least quarterly data would be available or bulletins/reports on vital statistics can be produced.

Life Tables were prepared for year 2001 for which a full compliment of data was available (from the Population and Housing Census). Preparation is currently being made for Population Projections and Estimations on a more reliable basis yielding to more valid projections and estimations; as long as suitable software is obtained and learned and the problems with migration statistics are sorted out. Currently it is just a normal model of population, birth and death with some idea of the country and migration imposed on the calculation.

Gender Statistics

Ground work has been started on the compilation of a database on gender statistics or disaggregation of data by gender up to 2004 for the release of a gender profile report, covering major gender policy areas, in the first quarter of 2005.

Migration Statistics

This is an area where there needs to be some institutional strengthening. Data on migration from the Immigration Office is difficult to obtain as the problem lies in their collection and storage of the data. This has been a drawback in the estimation of population as all other variables for population projection and estimation are in the control by the Statistics Office.

The Immigration Office recently computerized its operations with the implementation of a computer software called “Border and Immigration Control”. Two (2) staff members from the Office attended the training to observe and input on how there can be collaboration between the Immigration Department and the Statistics Office, for instance, timely submissions of reports on migration statistics.

It is hoped that in the coming year, with the implementation of this system, some arrangement can be worked out to obtain valid and reliable data on migration statistics and hence population projections and estimations can be evaluated with a higher degree of accuracy.

ENVIRONMENTAL STATISTICS

➤ Status of Developmental Work

No immediate intention of expanding into Environmental Statistics unless with the recruitment of a Chief or Deputy, this person could programme it into the current work activities or arrange for training of staff in this area.

MEASURABILITY OF THE INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

TECHNOLOGY (ICT) SECTOR

➤ National Efforts at Measuring ICT

Effort has been made to monitor this sector. The main source of data for this sector is Cable and Wireless (C&W), which is the monopoly for the telecommunication industry. Our database has numbers (not reflective of households but total population) for the TCI on fixed residential and business line, mobile and Internet subscribers from 1998 to 2003. However, C&W is currently working on disaggregating the data by island for our purposes and plans to submit data to us annually. The only information we have by households on personal computers or telephones is from the Census. However, a proxy of imports of computers for personal use can also be used. Nonetheless, indicators of telephone lines, mobile phones and Internet per 100 persons are available but not number of households with these facilities.

OTHER

Yearbook of Statistics

Work is currently being done on producing third Yearbook of Statistics. Although the one for 2002 was never published, its data is available for use. It is hoped that a combined Yearbook of Statistics (for the two year 2002 and 2003) would be completed by year ending 2004. As indicated last year, the task of the compilation of the Yearbook was rotated and therefore a third person now has exposure to the data sources and logistics involved in preparing such a publication. This task would continue to be rotated for subsequent years.

The latest Yearbook of Statistics (2003) will contain additional tables for some sections and combined tables for other sections. This was realized after a revision of the first Yearbook of Statistics was done and ways of improvements were noted.

The Manual describing in detail the stages of production of the Yearbook of Statistics was completed.

TCI Quick Facts & Figures

The derived publication "Quick Facts and Figures" for 2003 was also produced with this period of reporting and will continue to be produced annually. The publication reported key statistics on the Turks and Caicos Islands for 2001, 2002 and 2003 where available. The layout and designed of this second publication were also revised.

Population and Housing Census 2001

The Executive Council has approved the release of the Census results in November 2003. The Preliminary Census report is now in wide circulation. The final volumes of the Census report were contract out for preparation. This stage was completed and the Office is awaiting the satisfaction/approval of the Department on the draft volumes before they become final. The Administrative and Population Projection Reports from the 2001 Census are still pending though we had expected for them to be completed within the reporting year. However, these reports should be completed in the new year. The concern is, however, for these reports to be comparable regionally and it is therefore advocated that there be an independent review of them by a member of the RCC Committee.

The plan for 2005 in this area is to prepare a series of monographs from the 2001 Census (such as: Housing, Population Projections, Migration, The Disabled, The Foreign Born Population and Income and Expenditure).

Training and Education Opportunities

Two (2) of the staff from the Office (Economic Statistician and Statistical Survey Officer) attended a two weeks Balance of Payments/International Investment Position course in April, 2004 held at the Amaryllis Hotel, Christ Church, Barbados during March 8-19, 2004. This course was sponsored and executed by CARTAC.

During May to August of 2004 two (2) Statistical Technicians began the six (6) months Certificate Programme in Social and Economic Statistics at University of Technology (UTech), Jamaica. Three months were completed this year and the other three will be completed next year by which time the other two Statistical Technicians would begin the course. The hope is that by 2006, the entire staff of the Office would have at least basic Statistics qualification.

Two persons responsible for Trade Statistics were to attend the EUROTRACE training, held in association with EUROSTAT at the Rex St Lucian Hotel, Castries, St. Lucia, September 20-28, 2004. However, due to the hurricane experienced during this time it was inevitable that the staff could not be in attendance.

There are still many areas of training needs (GIS, National Accounts are of major importance) for the staff and any assistance in securing training opportunities would be greatly appreciated. Our GIS seems to be experiencing problems and the Officer responsible is not fully equipped to overcome these problems. There was a plan to have this Officer on a GIS attachment at another Statistical Office; however, this did not come to fruition.

Other Matters:

Statistics Act

The Statistical Act for the TCI was drafted by the Attorney General's Chambers. However, it has to be discussed before going on to the Legislative Council for approval by the Head of Department and Chief/Deputy Statistician, which therefore is a setback as there is no administrative head for the Statistical Unit.

Programme of Work for the Period November 2004 - November 2005

The programme of work outlined below is therefore tentative as the incoming Chief and/or Deputy Chief Statistician should be allowed the flexibility to amend the work programme as (s)he sees fit.

Given the nascent stage of development of the TCI Statistical Office and the learning curve that the staff is now on-going, it is advocated 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 would be documented to ensure continuity for the long term. Priority will be given to: improving quality and timeliness of conventional series, improving response rates and on institutional strengthening.

The only major plan for 2005 is the development of a web page for hosting the Office's and Department's data, which would be linked to the TCI Government's website. This would be accomplished by the recruitment of a Statistical Analyst/Programmer in February/March 2005 whose portfolio would include, among other tasks, the development of this web page.