



April - September 2024

The "Strong Albanian Local Statistics" project, SALSTAT II, is part of the "Bashki të Forta" project of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) taking place from October 2022 - September 2026.

The "Bashki të Forta" project is focused on a number of different aspects of local development in Albania, with the objective of supporting decentralization and local governance.

The project's key stakeholders include INSTAT, municipalities, and select line ministries and government agencies, particularly those engaged in statistical data collection and/or responsible for administrative data/registers.

In the new phase, SALSTAT II will deepen its collaboration with municipalities and other state agencies to foster trust in official statistics and engage with stakeholders on the value of official statistics for democratic governance and decision-making, particularly for municipalities to fulfil their tasks, duties and functions.

Content:

- Dissemination of the Statistical Yearbook for Regions and Municipalities;
- Memorandum of Understanding between INSTAT and 61st Municipalities;
- Working group INSTAT/SALSTAT and State Ministry of Local Governance;
- Reconfiguration of the data center primary system at INSTAT;
- Albanian Statistical Register of Building and Dwelling;
- Continuation of the regular trainings in the field of waste statistics at municipality level;
- Introduction of modern data collection systems for municipality data collection (Building Permits and Pre-school Education);
- Training for INSTAT staff for new methodologies on sample surveys for representatives on regional and local level.

Dissemination of the Statistical Yearbook for Regions and Municipalities

The Regional Statistical Yearbook for 2023 was printed in/on Q1/2024 and distributed to all relevant parties. Additionally, the action plan for the publication of the Regional Yearbook for 2024 was developed at the beginning of May.



In line with the work plan, both the English and Albanian versions of the Regional Statistical Yearbook 2024 are scheduled for publication on December 2024.

Memorandum of Understanding between INSTAT and 61 Municipalities

In April 2024 a meeting was held between the General Director of INSTAT, Ms. Dhuli and the Minister of State and Local Government, Mr. Mazniku. The project manager of SALSTAT attended the meeting.

The primary focus of the meeting was to discuss the collaboration and coordination between the two institutions with regard to data collection and training for municipalities.

On 22 May 2024, INSTAT signed a Memorandum of Understanding with 61 municipalities to foster statistical cooperation and data collection at the local level.

The event was attended by the General Director of INSTAT, Ms. Dhuli; the Minister of State and Local Government, Mr. Mazniku; the Head of Governance and Health Domains at the Swiss Embassy, Ms. Sabine Piccard; the Project Manager of SALSTAT, Mr. Teichgraeber; mayors and deputy mayors.

Further information regarding the Memorandum of Understanding signing between INSTAT and the Municipalities can be found on the INSTAT website, in both English and Albanian, via the links below:

<https://www.instat.gov.al/en/about-us/activities/promotion-of-statistics/signing-ceremony-between-instat-and-municipalities/>

<https://www.instat.gov.al/al/rreth-nesh/aktivitetet/promovimi-i-aktiviteteve-statistikore/n%C3%abnshkruhet-memorandum-bashk%C3%abpunimi-midis-instat-dhe-bashkive-n%C3%ab-vend/>



Working group INSTAT/SALSTAT and State Ministry of Local Governance

In June 2024, the working group (WG) comprising INSTAT, SALSTAT, and the State Ministry of Local Governance was established with the objective of enhancing cooperation. The objective of this initiative is to foster collaboration between INSTAT, various institutions, and the Ministry of State for Local Government under the SALSTAT II project.

To date, a number of meetings have been held to address issues related to the updating of municipal data, which is crucial for the production of official statistics. In addition, meetings have been held to assess the capacity-building needs related to data collection and processing, and to plan training sessions for municipal staff, who serve as both data providers and users. These training sessions are supported by the SALSTAT project.



Reconfiguration of the data center primary system at INSTAT

On January 31, 2024, INSTAT fell victim to a cyber-attack orchestrated by an Iranian hacking group named 'Homeland Justice.' The attack targeted INSTAT's digital infrastructure, raising significant concerns about data integrity, privacy, and potential operational disruptions.

In response to the cyber-attack, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) expressed its support for measures to strengthen cybersecurity and reestablish internal and external communications during the Donor's meeting on 22 February 2024.

This support includes the reconfiguration of INSTAT's primary data center system and the purchase of Microsoft Endpoint for users and servers.

In June 2024, INSTAT submitted a comprehensive report to the Swiss Embassy detailing the support received to enhance cybersecurity and reestablish communications.

Albanian Statistical Register of Building and Dwelling

In the context of the SALSTAT project, INSTAT is implementing the Albanian Statistical Register of Buildings and Dwellings (ASRBD).

On 25 March 2024, the Parliament approved the new organizational structure of INSTAT. The progress made in implementing the ASRBD is reflected in the introduction of the ASRBD to the Geoinformation Sector, which is now called: The Geoinformation Sector and the Statistical Register of Buildings and Dwellings.

Throughout this period, the Swiss expert on the ASRBD has been in regular contact with the team, holding several online meetings to discuss the next steps in implementing the register and the necessary maintenance procedures.



The GIS team completed a two-block Introductory Python programming course between April and July 2024. This training was undertaken in order to enhance the team's technical capabilities in a specific area of the ASRBD. The course represented a significant milestone in the team's professional development for the development of the ASRBD.

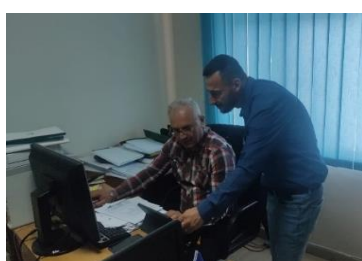
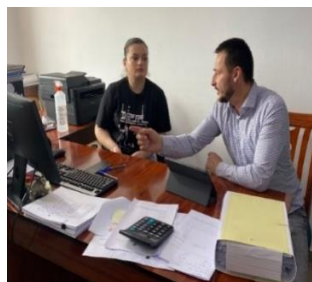
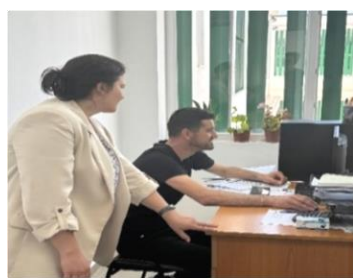


Continuation of the regular trainings in the field of waste statistics at municipality level

In the context of Outcome 3, municipalities receive support to enhance their statistical capabilities and demonstrate heightened awareness of the significance of official statistics in Albania. In close collaboration with the Environment and Forestry unit of INSTAT, the action plan for on-site training of the designated personnel in the municipalities that completed the 2023 Waste and Household Survey was implemented. Accordingly, the training was provided exclusively to municipal staff, given the potential for personnel changes. In May 2024, the on-site training for the designated personnel from the municipalities responsible for completing the 2023 waste and household survey web survey took place.

The trainings were conducted by INSTAT/SALSTAT visiting 26 municipalities, where training was provided to new staff members. The following municipalities were visited: Lushnjë, Divjakë, Kavajë, Peqin, Tropojë, Kukës, Bulqizë, Mirditë, Shkodër, Vau i Dejës, Fushë Arrëz, Malësi e Madhe, Memaliaj, Delvinë, Finiq, Libohovë, Tepelenë, Përmet, Gjirokastër, Ersekë, Patos, Skrapar, Kuçovë, Berat, Belsh, and Selenicë.

The municipal surveys were completed in June 2024, with the national results published on 21 September 2024. The statistics at the municipal level will be included in the Regional Yearbook 2024.



Introduction of modern data collection systems for municipality data collection

The objective of the modernization of the INSTAT data collection system is twofold: firstly, to enhance the quality of the data collected, and secondly, to reduce the administrative burden on municipalities in relation to the official data collection process from INSTAT.

Building Permits:

In the context of digital transformation, SALSTAT (Strong Albanian Local Statistics) and INSTAT have joined forces to develop and deliver a training programme on the statistical data collection on building permits. This session of training was designed to support municipalities in the field of local statistics.

The aim of this training initiative consisted on data collection of the indicators on “Building Permits”, which will in the future be conducted through a web-based data collection platform (online questionnaire) developed entirely by INSTAT.

The main topics of the training were:

- Importance of statistics related to building permits / Legal frame;
- Definitions of indicators. Methodology used for data collection;
- Practical examples of how to fill in electronic data with online questionnaire.

The training was organized in groups with representatives from each municipality. Trainers from the Directorate of Economic Statistics and the IT department of INSTAT led the sessions.

A total of 54 staff members were trained, including 28 women, representing 52% of the participants.

Staff representatives from 44 out of 61 municipalities were trained, covering 72% of the total municipalities.

The first data collection with this new platform will be in October 2024. It is planned that the statistics to be published within end of November 2024.



Pre-school Education Statistics at municipal level (a new field of statistics):

In May 2024, INSTAT responsible team for pre-school statistics, has prepared a draft questionnaire for a new data collection for pre-school education (public kindergartens and nurseries) from municipalities.

In light of the aforementioned developments, a meeting was held at INSTAT in May between Ms. Elsa Dhuli, General Director of INSTAT; Mr. Martin Teichgraeber, Project Manager of SALSTAT; Mr. Murat Sahin, UNICEF representative in Albania; and Ms. Elda Denaj, UNICEF staff member in Albania. At the meeting, the General Director provided an overview of the general availability of data on education and outlined the plan to modernise the data collection of nursery and pre-school education in collaboration with municipalities.



In line with these developments, INSTAT/SALSTAT held several joint meetings between April and July 2024 with SALSTAT and Helvetas project to discuss the possibility of collecting pre-school education statistics at the municipal level. These meetings form part of an initiative to expand the availability of local-level indicators. The discussions led to a consensus on the need to strengthen the collaboration between INSTAT, SALSTAT and Helvetas with regard to the collection of pre-school education statistics at the municipal level.



In July – August 2024, meetings were held in seven pilot municipalities to test the questionnaire for public kindergartens and nurseries as part of the plan of activities for the finalization of instruments for data collection.

- Municipality of Librazhd and Pogradec
- Municipality of Rrëshen and Has
- Municipality of Patos and Vlora
- Municipality of Tirana.

In order to develop a new, modernized data collection system for pre-school education, INSTAT has considered the following:

- internal needs related to the further development of education statistics;
- international requests to increase the number of indicators sent to Eurostat and UNESCO;
- needs from the “Standard Living Sector” related to the European System of integrated Social Protection Statistics (ESPROSS) (two questions about income and expenses);
- kindergarten form from HELVETAS (civil status and social services module),
- feedback from UNICEF.

The municipality's representatives responsible for pre-university education have assured INSTAT that they will collect information from other sectors of the municipality for the parts of the questionnaire that were not covered by this sector.



During September 2024 the Quality Comity of INSTAT approved the draft questionnaire, from which point the IT department has begun to finalize the web-link for the questionnaire for this new field of statistics on pre-school education. The trainings for the municipalities are planned to take place in Q4/2024.

Training INSTAT staff for new methodologies on sample surveys for representatives on the regional and local level

On 16th April 2024 was held the Kick off meeting on R - Statistic training, with experts from the Swiss Federal Statistical Office (FSO) and INSTAT staff.



There were several exchanges between INSTAT staff and FSO experts, including a draft for the course content on R – Statistics. The training was composed of two blocks: one training for beginners and one training for the methodological department of INSTAT, which is more advanced a concentrated especially on sampling methods. Training took place from 23th September – 04th October 2024, at INSTAT premises.



THANK YOU READING OUR NEWSLETTER!

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