



October 2024 – March 2025

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

Key stakeholders in the SALSTAT project include INSTAT, municipalities, and selected line ministries and government agencies—particularly those involved in statistical data collection and/or responsible for administrative data and registers.

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

Content:

- Development of a digital dissemination concept for the publication of statistical data for regions and municipalities, giving access to all data sources;
- Exchange of stakeholders in building trust in statistics at municipality level;
- Working group INSTAT/SALSTAT and State Ministry of Local Governance;
- Albanian Statistical Register of Building and Dwelling;
- Continuation of the regular trainings in the field of waste statistics to explain the tools of the data collection, its content and the methods to be applied for municipalities;
- Pre-school Education Statistics at municipal level;
- Forestry statistics (a new field of statistics);
- Training INSTAT staff for new methodologies on sample surveys for representatives on the regional and local level;
- The National Forum for Local Democracy”; Good Local Governance: Transparency and Accountability in Decision-Making;
- Support the establishment of Vital statistics of birth, deaths etc;
- Training for the new staff of INSTAT and for the Regional Statistical Offices staff of INSTAT.

Development of a digital dissemination concept for the publication of statistical data for regions and municipalities, giving access to all data sources

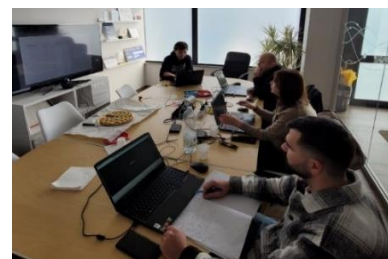
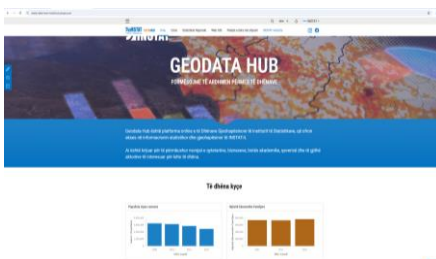
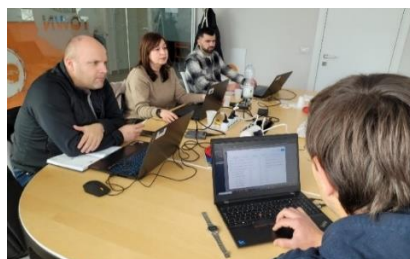
The GIS team worked closely with the experts for the setup of a web-based IT platform (dashboard) for secured data dissemination and their incorporation in the INSTAT internet for a user-friendly and up-to-date dissemination for Census 2023 data and for statistics about regions and municipalities at INSTAT.



The INSTAT DataHub is a platform developed by the Institute of Statistics (INSTAT) in Albania to provide access to statistical and geospatial data. It serves as a repository for official statistics, enabling researchers, policymakers, and the public to explore, analyze, and download data on various sectors such as demographics, economics, education, health, and more. The platform is designed to promote transparency and informed decision-making by offering reliable, user-friendly, and up-to-date statistical information.

From 03rd - 07th December 2024 the GIS team of INSTAT participated in the training: "Dissemination of Census geospatial data and Regional Statistics".

The PxWeb Connector is a tool or integration that facilitates the extraction and transfer of statistical data from PxWeb, a platform commonly used by statistical agencies for publishing official statistics.



INSTAT continued to populate the Geo-Data Hub (dashboard) with data from Census and data from the Regional Yearbook. In addition, also the work continued to further develop and optimize the dashboard. The final version should be available by June 2025.

Exchange of stakeholders in building trust in statistics at municipality level

Between November 11th and November 21st, 2024, field visits were conducted with the expert for the purpose of monitoring and evaluation. The municipalities visited included Kavajë, Gjirokastër, Përmet, Korçë, Përrenjas, Librazhd, Maliq, and Pogradec.

The purpose of the visits was directly aligned with Outcome 3 of the SALSTAT Project: Municipalities receive support to build their statistical competencies and capacities, and demonstrate increased awareness of the role of official statistics in Albania.

Specific Outputs Addressed:

- 3.1: Trainings and capacity-building workshops for municipalities as data providers are regularly conducted.
- 3.2: Trainings and capacity-building workshops for municipalities as data users are regularly conducted.
- 3.3: An exchange between stakeholders has been initiated to increase understanding of and trust in official statistics.

During the visits, municipal staff were interviewed by the expert, who subsequently prepared a report (submitted to SDC). The conclusions were as follows:

The monitoring and evaluation visits across eight municipalities provided critical insights into the implementation and impact of SALSTAT's capacity-building initiatives. The team met directly with municipal officials and was able to assess the effectiveness of training programs, as well as understand local challenges related to data collection and use.

Municipalities expressed strong appreciation for the tailored training sessions—particularly those focused on pre-school education, building permits, and waste management statistics—which have improved their understanding of the role of official statistics in decision-making. However, there was a common request for continued training in Microsoft Excel to strengthen practical skills.

Despite these positive outcomes, recurring challenges persist, such as high staff turnover and the absence of dedicated statistical roles within municipalities. These issues significantly affect the sustainability and efficiency of capacity-building efforts.

The feedback gathered highlights the importance of follow-up actions to ensure the long-term impact of SALSTAT interventions. Officials emphasized the need for targeted training on local Census 2023 statistics, to enhance their ability to analyze and apply data for governance and planning purposes.

Additionally, municipalities requested more structured support to mitigate the effects of frequent staff changes—such as the development of a knowledge repository or the creation of more stable, dedicated roles for statistical work.

These follow-up measures are essential to build institutional resilience and maintain progress in improving statistical literacy and data-driven decision-making at the municipal level.

The visits proved invaluable in strengthening relationships with municipal officials, offering a platform for structured feedback, and tailoring future interventions to local needs. The monitoring team gained nuanced insights through direct engagement—insights that would not have been possible through remote evaluation methods—reinforcing the importance of face-to-face interactions in building trust, promoting collaboration, and driving meaningful progress.



Working group INSTAT/SALSTAT and State Ministry of Local Governance

On December 24th, a meeting was held between the INSTAT/SALSTAT working group and the Agency for the Support of Local Governance. The discussion focused on the preschool education and building permits trainings conducted by INSTAT/SALSTAT for municipal staff, aimed at supporting the collection of statistics in these areas through web-based surveys developed by INSTAT.

Representatives from the Agency also presented their own training activities and collaboration with municipalities, particularly in relation to performance indicators. They highlighted the reimbursement plan for municipalities, which includes seven key indicators:

1. Agriculture and livestock
2. Education
3. Social indicators
4. Waste management
5. Gender

6. Integrity
7. The performance measurement system

At the conclusion of the meeting, it was agreed to convene a follow-up session of the working group. It was also agreed that the training plans for municipal staff would be shared in advance to avoid overlaps and ensure better coordination. Additionally, the participants committed to exchanging manuals and training curricula to further align efforts and promote consistency.

Albanian Statistical Register of Building and Dwelling

As part of the SALSTAT project, INSTAT is implementing the Albanian Statistical Register of Buildings and Dwellings (ASRBD). During the reporting period, the INSTAT GIS team collaborated closely with the project expert. From January 8th to 9th, 2025, the kick-off seminar for the second IT mandate of the ASRBD took place.

Participants discussed the current status of the ASRBD and outlined the implementation steps for 2025. It was emphasized that the upcoming 12 months are critical for the successful implementation of the register.

The following key components or workstreams were identified:

- Census transformation for the ASRBD and the integration of Census data into the register
- Final development of the ASRBD application
- Development of a field application for data collection and maintenance
- Coordination and data mapping with the National Address Registry (NAR)

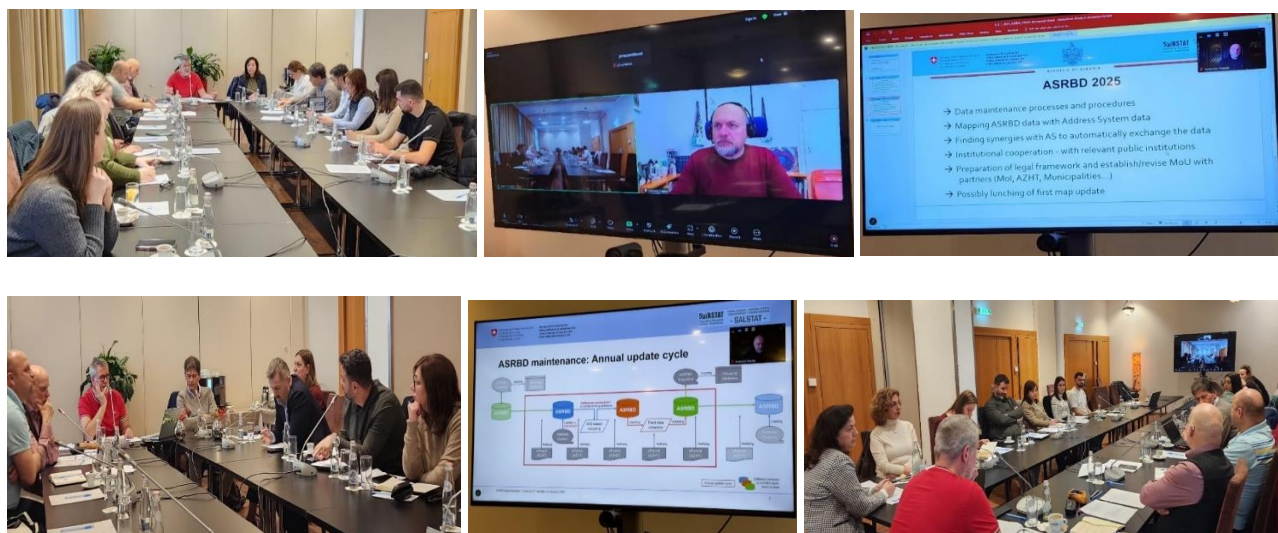
It was agreed that the work plan should be organized with a clear prioritization of tasks. The goal is to have a fully functional ASRBD by the end of the year, enabling both the initial implementation and future maintenance of the register.

Prioritization also implies adopting pragmatic and feasible solutions, as highlighted during discussions with NAR. Initial steps may need to focus on a one-time matching of buildings/entrances with addresses. More advanced features, such as complex web services, may be considered in later phases and are not expected to be part of the initial implementation.

Additionally, the need for a pilot dataset was agreed upon, to support further analysis and refinement of the matching process.

Due to the upcoming general elections and the ongoing work of the Civil Registry and Address System, the full matching process is expected to begin no earlier than May 2025.

By the end of January 2025, a final, detailed working plan will be established. This plan will incorporate the outcomes of the seminar discussions and will guide the implementation of the register's key components and workstreams.



On January 27–28, an international expert mission took place at INSTAT. The two-day visit focused on several key areas related to the development of the Albanian Statistical Register of Buildings and Dwellings (ASRBD). The main points discussed and addressed during the mission were as follows:

1. Improving the Approach to Managing Missing Buildings from the Census

The team explored methods to identify and incorporate buildings that were not captured during the Census. Discussions focused on developing an automated or semi-automated approach to include these missing buildings in the geodatabase of the future register.

2. Alignment on the Latest Geodatabase Specifications and Intermediate Data Format

Building on the documentation prepared in 2024, it was agreed that the existing geodatabase will be adapted to align with the latest specifications. Some clarifications are still needed to fully understand certain elements of the new geodatabase structure.

3. Planning Data Porting Operations

Preliminary guidelines were established for the upcoming tasks and activities required to prepare for the initial data loading phase. These steps will form the foundation for the smooth transfer and integration of data into the ASRBD system.

Continuation of the regular trainings in the field of waste statistics to explain the tools of the data collection, its content and the methods to be applied for municipalities

In February 2025, the Environment and Forestry Unit of INSTAT distributed the weblink for the 2024 Household Waste Survey to all 61 municipalities.

Throughout March, the unit will carry out quality control on the data submitted by the municipalities that completed the survey. The final results are expected to be published in September 2025.

By the end of March 2025, the Environment and Forestry Unit will inform the SALSTAT project about the number of municipalities that encountered difficulties in completing the questionnaire. This will help determine where on-site support may be needed to assist municipalities that are unable to complete the survey independently.

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

As part of efforts to expand local statistical indicators and embrace digital transformation, SALSTAT, in close collaboration with INSTAT, launched a training program on statistical data collection for preschool education. The initiative focuses on data collection for public nurseries and kindergartens at the municipal level through a web-based platform developed by INSTAT.

Currently, INSTAT disseminates only one preschool-related indicator at the municipal level: **“Number of children enrolled in kindergarten for the new academic year.”** There are no official indicators available at the municipal level for nurseries. The objective of this initiative is to increase the number of indicators collected and disseminated in the preschool sector (public kindergartens and nurseries) through an innovative, digital data collection system using an online questionnaire.

To support this goal, SALSTAT and INSTAT conducted a training program in October 2024 on the use of the web-based data collection platform for preschool statistics. This activity was carried out under:

- **Output 1.2.1:** Analysis and dissemination of public preschool education (day nurseries and kindergartens) indicators at the municipal level
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- **Output 3.1.4:** Implementation of training on (web-based) data collection systems (surveys or administrative data) with all 61 municipalities

The training covered the following key topics:

- The legal framework and importance of preschool statistics at the municipal level
- The questionnaire for nurseries and kindergartens

- Definitions of indicators and the methodology for data collection
- The web-based form for data collection
- Practical examples of completing the online questionnaire

The training sessions were conducted in groups, with representatives from each municipality, from **October 7th to 11th, 2024**. Trainers were drawn from the Social Statistics Development Sector and the IT Department of INSTAT.

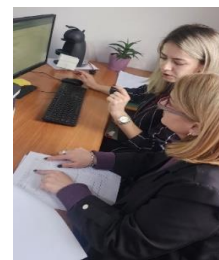
A total of **77 municipal staff** from **50 municipalities** were trained. Of these, **59 participants (80%) were women**. Overall, the training covered **82% of all municipalities**, representing a significant step toward nationwide implementation of digital preschool data collection.

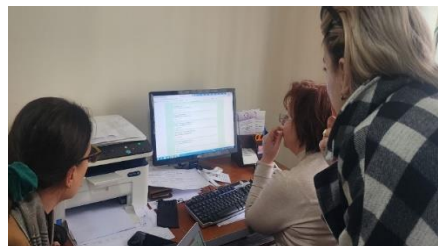
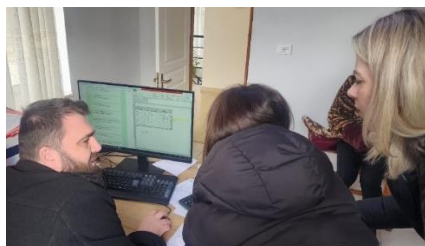


During the week of **January 13th – 17th, 2025**, a team from INSTAT's Social Directorate of Statistics, along with the trainers from the October training sessions and supported by coordinators, organized visits to the following municipalities: Dimal, Fier, Has, Himarë, Klos, Konispol, Memaliaj, Skrapar, Tepelenë, and Vlorë. These municipalities required additional support due to challenges in collecting complete and accurate data, primarily caused by a lack of adequate financial and administrative resources.

As a result, the need for a second retraining emerged. This retraining focused on providing a detailed explanation of the financial indicators to be collected, as well as the methods and locations for obtaining the necessary data. It was recommended that more detailed specifications for these indicators be included in the manual.

Following these on-site trainings, all required data was successfully submitted by the municipalities. INSTAT has confirmed receipt of the data.





Forestry statistics (a new field of statistics)

As part of activity **1.2.3**— “Create the data collection infrastructure and data flows (if possible, with efficient and effective web-based data collection modes) for statistics” and **1.2.3.4**— “Forestry statistics,” a kick-off meeting was held with the National Agency of Forestry (NAF) on **February 19th, 2025**.

During the meeting, the director of NAF provided an overview of the agency's work, which was established based on the **Council of Ministers Decision No. 570, dated July 17, 2019**, “On the Creation, Organization, and Functioning of the National Forestry Agency.” The director discussed the agency's achievements as well as the challenges it has faced. He explained that NAF collaborates with all **61 municipalities** and expressed a strong willingness to cooperate with INSTAT and the SALSTAT project in the field of forestry and pasture data collection at the municipal level. The agency showed great interest in learning how the National Agency of Forestry could contribute based on the Swiss experience.

INSTAT representatives emphasized the goals of this activity, supported by the SALSTAT project, and stressed the importance of collaboration with NAF for collecting statistics on forestry and pastures at the municipal level.

At the end of the meeting, it was agreed that INSTAT and NAF staff would finalize the draft questionnaire for pilot testing in several municipalities. This process would be carried out in collaboration with NAF staff, as per the director's request, to streamline and facilitate the data collection process. SALSTAT and INSTAT expressed their full support for the involvement of NAF in this effort.



During the time period 24th – 28th February 2025, the project team with an expert organized a Field Visit Monitoring and Evaluation on the forestry and pastures data in the municipalities of: Klos, Burrel, Bulqizë, Peshkopi, Shkodër, Lezhë, Malësi e Madhe, Elbasan, Librazhd, Përrenjas, and Korçë.

The purpose of these meetings is to engage with several municipalities to gather their feedback on the process. Specifically, we aim to assess:

- Their understanding of their role in this initiative.
- Their readiness to take on the responsibility of completing the forestry questionnaire by the end of March.
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During the week of **March 17th – 20th, 2025**, a team from INSTAT's Agricultural and Environmental Directorate, supported by SALSTAT coordinators, organized visits to the following municipalities: **Tepelenë, Përmet, Këlcyrë, Fier, Roskovec, Kukës, Tropojë, Mirditë, and Kurbin.**

At each municipality, staff working in the Forestry and Pastures Department participated in the meetings. INSTAT staff reviewed the entire questionnaire with the municipal teams, taking notes on data availability, relevant variables, and other key details. A detailed report will be prepared based on these discussions, reflecting the findings in the finalization of the draft questionnaire. This draft will then be submitted to INSTAT's Evaluation Committee for approval before being handed over to the IT department for the development of the web-based platform.

INSTAT successfully completed piloting the questionnaire for data collection on forestry and pastures at the municipal level across the **9 municipalities**: Tepelenë, Përmet, Këlcyrë, Fier, Roskovec, Kukës, Tropojë, Mirditë, and Kurbin. INSTAT staff, in collaboration with NAF staff, will incorporate the necessary adjustments and finalize the questionnaire, considering feedback from the municipal staff who are responsible for forestry and pastures data collection.

The final version of the questionnaire will be approved by INSTAT's Evaluation Commission, and the IT department will proceed with the development of the web-based link. In parallel, a manual will be prepared for training municipal staff who will be responsible for completing the data through the web link.





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

From 23rd September till 4th October, a two-week training on R – Statistics for INSTAT staff from Swiss Federal Statistical Office expert started at INSTAT premises. The training was composed in two blocks:

- 1 training for beginners during the 23rd – 27th September;
- 1 training for the methodological department of INSTAT, which is more advanced and concentrated especially on sampling methods from 30th September – 4th October 2024.

The main topics of the training were: Basics of the R language; Data frames; Data visualization; Statistical inference, regression; The use of R in sampling; Non-response treatment; Calibration; Applications.

In the training participated in total 25 employees from Methodology Sector and Statistical Production Sector.



The National Forum for Local Democracy”; Good Local Governance: Transparency and Accountability in Decision-Making

On 21st November 2024 the project team participated in the Forum organized in partnership with the Agency for the Support of Local Self-Government (AMVV) and with the special support of the Minister of State for Local Government, Mr. Arbjan Mazniku. This annual platform aims to bring together national and local leaders, donors, civil society representatives, and

interest groups to exchange best practices and enhance the role of local democracy across Albania.

During the third session of the forum: Data-Driven Decision-Making, the panel and participants had discussions on the role of statistical data and technology in local governance decision-making.

In the panel were present Mrs. Elsa Dhuli, General Director of INSTAT and Mr. Martin Teichgraeber, Project Manager of SALSTAT.



Support the establishment of Vital statistics of birth, deaths etc;

The training organized in close cooperation between INSTAT/ SALSTAT and General Directorate of Civil Status (GDCS) lasted from December 10th – 13th, 2024. The training was organized with two-day training per group, and there were two groups with around 15 employees per group as per the division done by GDCS of the Civil Status Offices (CSO) of Lezhë prefecture.

The 2-day training session proved to be informative and productive. The participants gained a better understanding of the goals of INSTAT and GDCS, and the importance of accurate vital statistics and administrative registers. They actively participated in discussions, shared their experiences, and proposed solutions to improve the quality of vital records. The training session concluded with a commitment from all participants to implement the knowledge gained and work collaboratively to enhance the registration process and data quality in Albania.

During the identification of the problems of death registrations, INSTAT proposed the distribution of the list of illness codes and description of the disease according to ICD 9 and ICD 10. This list, which includes the codification of diseases, will be a guide for the CSO staff, in cases where it is not possible to decipher the cause of death described by the doctor, but the 3-digit code can be clearly read according to the classification. The trainer recommends to the Civil Status Offices staff to register in the field of the death reason (which is a text variable) also the new code classification of IDC10, due to not availability of the implementation of the new classification in the NCSR.



Training for the new staff of INSTAT and for the Regional Statistical Offices staff of INSTAT

- a) During the time period 18th – 19th December took place the training on: **MICROSOFT 365 ESSENTIAL TRAINING**, for the first group of Statistical Regional Offices. The second group took the training during the time period 22nd – 23rd January 2025.



The successful completion of the "Microsoft 365 Essential Training" marks a significant step towards enhancing INSTAT's capacity to perform more efficiently and collaboratively. By

equipping staff with essential digital skills, the training contributes to the overarching goal of building a sustainable statistical system in Albania. In the end of the training each participant received a certificate of participation.

b) During the time period from 23rd – 24th December 2024 took place the **workshop on Census data results of all Regional Statistical Offices (RSO).**

As per the agenda the main thematics were as following:

| DAY 1 | DAY 2 |
|---|---|
| The role of Regional Statistical Offices in the distribution of results of Cens 2023 | The role of Regional Statistical Offices in the distribution of results of Cens 2023 |
| Data collection methodology and dissemination of detailed Cens results | Computer security and it's guarantee at INSTAT |
| Detailed Cens Results in Central Region - Profile of Districts and Municipalities | Summary of INSTAT's main activities for 2024, challenges and commitments for 2025 and the role of the RSO |
| Detailed Results of Cens in the South Region - Profile of Counties and Municipalities | |
| Detailed Cens Results in the Northern Region - Profile of Counties and Municipalities | |
| Presentation of Cens data through datahub platform | |
| Presentation of Cens data by WebGIS platform | |



c) On 26th December 2024 took place the workshop: **Regional statistics and their presentation by geographic component with central office INSTAT staff.**

As per the agenda of the meeting were the following points:

- Statistics databases, PxWeb Connector and computer security
- Presentation of Cens data through datahub platform
- Presentation of Cens data by WebGIS platform
- Discussions



THANK YOU READING OUR NEWSLETTER!

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