

GRANT OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the grant (as set out in the grant agreement) were to improve the availability, accessibility and quality of survey data, to avoid duplication of data collection activities, to improve cost-effectiveness of surveys, and to reduce the burden of international survey programs on national statistical systems. Priority areas of work were (i) coordinating international household survey programs, (ii) fostering adoption of international standards and best practices by harmonizing data collection instruments, (iii) developing and maintaining a central survey data repository, and (iv) developing tools and guidelines for improving survey data documentation, dissemination and preservation.

ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN AND RESULTS OBTAINED

The main activities implemented over the grant period included:

➤ **Development of the IHSN Microdata Management Toolkit**

The IHSN Microdata Management Toolkit is a software used by a large number of countries for the documentation and dissemination of their micro datasets, in compliance with international metadata standards and practices. The Toolkit comprises two main components: (i) a specialized metadata editor, built on a commercial application, and (ii) a CD-ROM Builder, developed by the World Bank and IHSN as open source software. The metadata editor component can be distributed free of charge to IHSN member agencies and to national statistical agencies in all low-income countries. Distribution of licenses to other users requires the purchase of additional licenses from the software developer.

During the Grant period:

- A new version of the Toolkit was released (June 2007) and disseminated on the IHSN website: www.ihsn.org/toolkit.
- Additional licenses of the metadata editor have been purchased to respond to growing demand (middle income countries and line ministries, not covered by initial licensing agreement)
- An improved version of the CD-ROM Builder has been distributed (open source)

➤ **Development of the IHSN National Data Archive**

To complement the IHSN Toolkit, the IHSN has developed an open source, web-based survey cataloguing system named NADA (for National Data Archive). This system takes full advantage of the XML technology, and is compliant with the same international metadata standards as the ones used by the IHSN Toolkit. The main objective of NADA is to allow data producers to better publicize and disseminate data and metadata.

During the Grant period:

- Version 1.0 of NADA has been developed, and implemented on a pilot basis in the context of the Accelerated Data Program (another DGF-sponsored program implemented by PARIS21) by NSOs in a few countries (Ethiopia, Sri Lanka, Uganda, Gambia, Liberia, Mongolia, Cameroon, and Nigeria) and other users (University of Cape Town, ESCAP, AFRISTAT).
- The application was publicly released in July 2008.

➤ **Development of microdata anonymization tools**

Legal and ethical issues remain a major obstacle to wider dissemination of microdatasets to the research community. To address these issues, and at the request of many countries, the IHSN has initiated the development of microdata anonymization tools.

During the Grant period, a collection of programs (plug-ins to be used in Stata or SPSS) have been developed for the measurement and reduction of disclosure risk associated with microdata dissemination. These programs will have to be thoroughly tested and documented before they can be disseminated.

➤ **Development of a strategy and tools for harmonization of survey methods**

To foster harmonization and improvement of data collection methodologies, the IHSN has initiated the development of a “Question Bank”, which aims to provide a central repository for international guidelines on survey design. The development of the Question Bank requires (i) the design and development of a web-based user interface, and (ii) the production of harmonized guidelines for survey design, in collaboration with multiple specialized agencies and IHSN partners.

During the Grant period:

- A prototype of the Question Bank application has been developed. After testing, this application will be further developed before its public launching.
- Content has been / is being generated for about 25 survey questionnaire modules. Each module has one or multiple custodian(s). Partnerships have been or are being established with FAO, ILO, UNICEF, UNESCO (UIS), WHO and the WB. Contributions from various lead experts are also received.

➤ **Production of guidelines on data documentation, dissemination and preservation**

The production of a series of IHSN technical papers has continued. The following have been produced:

- *Microdata Dissemination: Policy Guidelines and Recommendations.*
- *Survey Quality Assessment Framework* (first draft; being improved after internal review by the IHSN Secretariat).
- Producing Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) out of Population Census Data.

➤ **Maintenance of the IHSN Central Survey Catalog**

The IHSN maintains a central catalog of surveys and censuses conducted in developing countries. During the Grant period, the catalog has been regularly maintained. An extensive search for recent surveys has been undertaken. Identified surveys have been uploaded with relevant metadata.

➤ **Maintenance of the IHSN Website**

The IHSN website is being regularly maintained and improved.

➤ **Management Group Meeting**

- The IHSN Management Group met as required. The IHSN Secretariat reported on the progress of activities and the IHSN work program was discussed and endorsed by the Management Group. The minutes of the meetings are available at PARIS21.
- The IHSN description of status has been updated and approved by the Management Group.

Status of deliverables

Deliverables (as per Grant Agreement, Annex 1)	Status
a. Maintenance of the joint <i>information system on on-going and planned survey</i>	<p>On hold</p> <p>The IHSN had developed the web-based application under the previous grant. The content maintenance has however not progressed. The IHSN member agency who agreed to maintain the content of the database was unable to deliver. No solution has been found yet to solve this issue. One of the main challenges for the IHSN is to convince all concerned international and regional agencies involved in survey implementation to provide the necessary information. Having no legal status or mandate, the IHSN itself cannot impose and enforce such an obligation.</p>
b. Development of a Question Bank	<p>Initiated, good progress</p> <p>This multi-year activity will continue to be a core activity of the IHSN for the next years.</p>
c. Maintenance of the Central survey catalog	<p>Completed</p> <p>The catalog is regularly updated with contribution from a growing number of partners. The catalog is a key feature of the IHSN website. Maintaining the catalog will remain a regular activity of the IHSN.</p>
d. Technical support to users and further development of the <i>Microdata Management Toolkit</i>	<p>Completed</p> <p>Updates of the Toolkit (version 1.04) and associated guidelines have been posted on the IHSN website. Technical support has been provided to users (mostly through the ADP). The application was made available in English, Spanish, Russian, Arabic and Portuguese.</p>
e. Other guidelines and additional technical tools, including microdata anonymization tools	<p>Partially completed</p> <p>Some tools and guidelines are completed; others are still being reviewed and finalized.</p> <p>Developing anonymization tools is a very complex task, which is expected to continue under the next grants.</p>
f. Improvement of the redesigned IHSN website	<p>Partially completed</p> <p>Some improvements have been made. The IHSN website is however available only in English, and should be made available in French and Spanish.</p>

USE OF THE FUNDS

During the grant period, 57 contracts were processed with individual consultants, private companies and public institutions. The terms of reference and the summary of the outputs delivered under each contract are available upon request at the PARIS21 Secretariat.

Interim financial reports were submitted on 30 June 2007 and 31 December 2007. A final financial report was submitted at the end of the grant period. The grant budget (USD 750,000) was used as follows (USD):

Project staff	41,901
Intellectual services	297,663
Missions	130,283
Interpretation	19,201
Hardware, software, telecom, IT supplies	18,000
Postage and other administrative costs	2,593
Office supplies	34,872
Grant administration	18,750
Total expenditure	563,263
Balance (unspent – returned to World Bank)	186,737

MAIN ISSUES

The very short grant period is a major challenge. The 2007 Grant was signed on April 12, 2007 with a completion date on December 31, 2007. The implementation of some of the IHSN activities requires the establishment of formal agreements with external partners, such as the United Nations specialized agencies. Concluding such agreements may by itself be a long administrative process which may take several months. This sometimes leaves very little time for the implementation of the activities.

The unspent amount on the 2007 Grant resulted from such difficulties. The unspent budget had been committed for the implementation of joint activities with the World Health Organization (WHO), but the required Memorandum of Understanding could not be finalized because no agreement could be reached between the respective legal departments of OECD and WHO on the wording of the legal agreement.