

# PARIS21 Secretariat

## International Household Survey Network (IHSN) DGF 401008-06

### Final Report

#### BACKGROUND

Since April 2006, the IHSN core program is implemented as a satellite program of the PARIS21 Secretariat at OECD. It is supported by the World Bank MAPS Development Grant Facility (DGF).

A grant of USD750,000 was allocated for year 2008 under the Grant Agreement DGF 401008-06. The grant was signed on 12 December 2007, with a closing date on 31 December 2008. The closing date was extended to 30 June 2009 as per the amendment signed on 24 November 2008.

This final progress report is submitted in accordance with the Section 3.1 of the Framework for Cooperation. It covers the full grant period.

Progress and results on this grant have been reported through the required semi-annual reports on 30 June 2008, 31 December 2008 and 30 June 2009.

The extensions of the closing dates of the 2007 and 2008 Grants give some overlap in the consecutive grants' operation periods, as follows:

	2007 1 <sup>st</sup> Half	2007 2 <sup>nd</sup> Half	2008 1 <sup>st</sup> Half	2008 2 <sup>nd</sup> Half	2009 1 <sup>st</sup> Half	2009 2 <sup>nd</sup> Half
IHSN 2007						
IHSN 2008						
IHSN 2009						

## 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:

### ➤ **Maintenance of the IHSN Microdata Management Toolkit**

The Toolkit is a standard microdata management tool used in both ADP and non-ADP countries, and by an increasing number of international organizations (e.g., used by UNICEF for documenting MICS3 surveys, by the World Food Program for its Vulnerability Assessment Mapping surveys, by the World Bank, etc.).

On this grant, a new version of the Metadata Editor (and associated IHSN utilities) has been developed and tested (Version 1.1) to respond to the needs expressed by some users. A CSPro to DDI conversion stand-alone utility program was also developed and tested. This software will be integrated in future versions of CSPro (a data entry and editing software developed by the US Bureau of Census – International program Center, used in over 100 countries).

Despite its success, the Metadata Editor component of the Toolkit has however some issues that will need to be addressed within the following IHSN grants. The application is not Unicode compliant, and is not open source. As more and more users around the world (and not only in developing countries) are interested in using the software, the IHSN is considering developing a non-commercial, open source version of this component of the Toolkit.

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

NADA is a DDI-compliant survey cataloguing system, developed by the IHSN as an open source software to complement the Microdata Management Toolkit. The software is compliant with the Open Archive Initiative standard (XML). NADA is being used in the context of the ADP by NSOs and other users in many countries, and by international organizations (IHFAN).

On this grant, the application NADA 1.1 was tested and launched in July 2008. Additional improvements, needed by users in a mid-term horizon, will be added to the Version 2.0 (improved user and administrator interface, faster search engine, etc.), which has been developed and tested over this grant. Most of the training of users is done in the context of the ADP.

NADA is available in English, French and Spanish.

### ➤ **Development of microdata anonymization tools**

The IHSN initiated the development of microdata anonymization tools over the previous grant, with the objective to develop a collection of open source, well documented specialized programs for Stata, SPSS and SAS. This will not require heavy maintenance and support, and will not require any new software learning for users.

On this grant:

- Plugins have been developed for disclosure risk measurement and for risk reduction. The IHSN has now a complete “anonymization toolbox”. This work was conducted by IHSN consultants, in collaboration with universities and researchers who shared their algorithms.
- An expert group meeting with key partners was organized on 27-28 October 2008 in Paris. The IHSN work was presented and discussed, as well as the remaining activities required. In addition to the IHSN Secretariat team and consultants, participants included representatives from the University of Manchester’s Centre for Census and Survey Research, ISTAT, Cornell University, ICPSR of the University of Michigan, University of Minnesota (IPUMS), OECD Statistics Directorate, and the Institute for Employment Research, Nuremberg. The conclusions of the meeting were:
  - The IHSN is working in the right direction.
  - Testing the tools using real data from various kinds of surveys is the next step ahead. One output of the testing work should be the calibration of the tools outputs, to facilitate their interpretation.
  - Regular contact with the individuals and with the group itself will be maintained. Terms of Reference have been designed to contract the Cornell University to implement part of the work plan.

### ➤ **Production of technical guidelines**

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

- Microdata Dissemination: Policy Guidelines and Recommendations (being updated).
- Survey Quality Assessment Framework (second draft; being finalized by a team of experts at Reading University, UK).
- IHSN guidelines on the long-term preservation of digital data and metadata (terms of reference have been designed with the International Consortium for Political and Social research (ICPSR, a large data center at the University of Michigan, USA)).

### ➤ **Development of the IHSN Question Bank**

To foster harmonization and improvement of data collection methodologies, the IHSN has initiated the development of a Question Bank. The IHSN Question Bank is an XML-based repository of international guidelines on survey questionnaire design. It will provide recommended formulation of questions, answer categories and routing as well as interviewer’s instructions, editing notes and other technical material to help support the collection of high quality data at the national level. Alongside questions, the application will also house information on classifications, indicators and concept definitions, which will be used to make a transparent link from survey questions to indicator construction and generation.

On this grant, efforts have focused on:

### **Developing the application:**

A lot of work has been done on the user interface application, but it still requires development. The IHSN has identified an additional partner to refine the application and has designed detailed terms of reference for the finalization of the application.

A user friendly open source XML editor has been developed to manage the content of the Question Bank.

### **Developing the content:**

#### Indicators:

The IHSN secretariat has focused its efforts on generating metadata on standard indicators and concepts for social survey data (MDG, World Fit for Children indicators as well as a number of the more generic indicators). A large number of standard indicators that are used across the international statistical system have been identified and consolidated for entry to the Question Bank. This has been a process of distilling and reconciling material from a variety of websites, papers and documents; making it available in a user friendly, consistent and standard way.

#### Key survey modules:

Where agencies have established a consensus on questions for specific topics, these have been pre entered to the Question Bank. These modules will need to be checked and ratified by the relevant custodians e.g. WHO/UNICEF for health based topics. IHSN have also added the metadata for some draft modules such as the ILO long module on international labor migration and remittances, and these can be disseminated in draft for comments when the first version of the Question Bank is released. Other modules developed include:

- *Harmonized modules for economic activity*
- *Harmonized modules on Savings and Wealth*
- *Harmonized module on Social capital*

#### ➤ **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 updated.

#### ➤ **Maintenance of the IHSN Website**

The IHSN website is being regularly maintained and improved. A new version of the website is being prepared.

#### ➤ **Management Group Meeting**

The IHSN Management Group met on 22 May 2008. 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.

## USE OF THE FUNDS

During the grant period, 42 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 2008, 31 December 2008 and 30 June 2009. 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	114,574
Intellectual services	481,501
Missions	85,148
Conference, reception expenses	37,341
Translation	2,018
Hardware, software, telecommunication, IT supplies	5,559
Other administrative costs, postage	5,109
Grant administration	18,750
Total expenditure	750,000

## MAIN ISSUES

The one year grant period is a major challenge. Many of the IHSN member agencies would like to establish formal agreements with the IHSN Secretariat to support the implementation of work programs and the funding of agreed activities. This is the case of several United Nations specialized agencies. Concluding such agreements has proven impossible on several occasions as it is a long administrative process which may take several months, which leaves very little time for the implementation of the activities. The IHSN Secretariat had no other choice than avoiding systematically these formal agreements, which has an impact on the way the Secretariat can work and interact with its partners.