

# PARIS21 Secretariat

## International Household Survey Network (IHSN) DGF 401009-06

### Final Report

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#### 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 USD 1,000,000 was allocated for year 2009 under the Grant Agreement DGF 401009-06. The grant was signed on 18 December 2008, with a closing date on 31 December 2009. The funds were received at OECD on 2 February 2009.

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 2009 and 31 December 2009.

The extension of the closing dates of the 2008 Grant gave some overlap with the 2009 grant, as follows:

	2008 First Half	2008 Second Half	2009 First Half	2009 Second Half	2010 First Half	2010 Second Half
IHSN 2008						
IHSN 2009						
IHSN 2010						

## 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 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 (including developed countries), and by an increasing number of international organizations.

On this grant, the version 1.1 of the Metadata Editor (and associated IHSN utilities) has been made available at: [www.ihsn.org/toolkit](http://www.ihsn.org/toolkit). The IHSN templates have been upgraded to version 1.5. A revision of the Arabic version of the Toolkit was undertaken by users in Tunisia, Palestine, Lebanon and Egypt.

One component of the Toolkit (the Metadata Editor) is still based on a commercial application. The software developer has not yet confirmed its intention to upgrade the application to meet recent requirements from the IHSN. As a result, the IHSN has initiated the production of technical terms of reference for the possible development of a new, open source version of the Metadata Editor. No decision has been made so far, and discussions with the software developer will continue over 2010 – as the IHSN does not have the vocation to be a software developer and its focus is shifting towards survey guidelines harmonization.

### ➤ **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 (WFP, IHFAN).

On this grant, the Version 2 of the application has been tested, finalized and made available at: [www.ihsn.org/nada](http://www.ihsn.org/nada). This new version features improved user and administrator interface, faster search engine, etc.

At the end of the grant period, NADA was used by about 20 statistical agencies worldwide to catalog their surveys and provide access to survey meta and microdata. NADA is available in English, French and Spanish.

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

The tools developed by the IHSN are being tested by the Computer Center at Cornell University. This activity is a direct follow-up of the expert meeting organized in Paris in October 2008.

These tools require proper testing and “calibration”. A study is being conducted, comparing under different metrics the various algorithms used to assess and reduce disclosure risk. A first draft of the paper has been submitted to the IHSN. The final results of the study will be released in 2010.

Several National Statistical Offices have expressed their interest in using the tools on a pilot basis when they are available.

### ➤ **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/finalized).
- Guidelines on the long-term preservation of digital data and metadata (commissioned to the International Consortium for Political and Social research –ICPSR-, a draft has been submitted to the IHSN).
- Guidelines on the Use of Household Budget Surveys for Food Fortification Programs: this IHSN Working Paper presents guidelines intends to improve household expenditure surveys as a tool for designing and assessing fortification programs, and thereby aid in accelerating the development of more evidence-based fortification programs. The guidelines are available on the IHSN website.
- Demographic and Health Surveys archiving templates (produced to facilitate documentation/archiving of DHS).

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

An important activity of the IHSN is the harmonization of international survey guidelines. This is being done by developing the IHSN Question Bank. The IHSN Question Bank aims to be a central repository of survey modules, indicators and concept definitions, and classifications. This repository has two main purposes:

- Help statisticians design surveys questionnaires by learning from a diverse set of models.
- Provide a tool for identifying inconsistencies in, and fostering harmonization of, international guidelines.

All metadata are stored in an XML file. The Question Bank makes use of an XML schema developed by the IHSN. This schema borrows many elements from the DDI, SDMX, and Dublin Core standards.

The User Interface was developed in Flex (web version) and AIR (stand-alone version). A specialized XML editor was developed in C#.

Both applications (user interface and editor) have been delivered to the IHSN Secretariat. The user interface has been made available from the IHSN website to authorized users for further test and comment. The editor still needs minor improvements.

## **Content development:**

The content of the Question Bank is generated by specialized international agencies (notably IHSN member agencies) and by experts commissioned by the IHSN. The IHSN Secretariat coordinates the maintenance of the system. As a test of the application, the following have already been entered in the Question Bank over the grant 2009:

- Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, Round 3 (MICS 3, UNICEF)
- Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, Round 4 (MICS 4, UNICEF)
- Demographic and Health Survey, Round 6 (DHS 6, Macro International)
- Key Indicators Survey (AIS, Macro International)
- Key Indicators Survey (KIS, Macro International)
- Malaria Indicator Survey (MIS, Macro International)
- Core Welfare Indicators Survey (CWIQ, World Bank)
- Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS – selected modules, World Bank)
- Service Availability Mapping (SAM, WHO)
- Education modules (EPDC, with support of UIS)
- Labor force modules (developed by ILO/IHSN)
- Food vulnerability modules (WFP)
- ...

These modules include a total of 4,903 questions (in 258 survey modules), 604 classifications, and 186 indicators. Many of the indicators available have been provided by WHO (import from SDMX-HD to the Question Bank).

Work is also in progress with various agencies (UNESCO/UIS, WFP, WHO) and group of experts to generate new, harmonized content for the Question Bank:

### ➤ **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 has been launched in November 2009.

### ➤ **Management Group Meeting**

The IHSN Management Group did not meet formally over the grant period. However, the PARIS21 Consortium Meeting held in Dakar in November 2009 gave IHSN members a good opportunity for networking. In addition, several displays and posters were displayed during the four day session, and the outputs of the network were recognized by many speakers, including President Wade from Senegal in his opening speech.

## USE OF THE FUNDS

During the grant period, 37 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 2009 and 31 December 2009. A final financial report is also submitted at the end of the grant period. The grant budget (USD 1,000,000) was used as follows (USD):

Project staff	154,115
Intellectual services	575,643
Missions	157,232
Hardware and software	12,352
Other costs	65,658
Grant administration	35,000
Total expenditure	1,000,000

## 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.