



Editorial

Institutional Development

The Steering Committee on the establishment of an autonomous National Statistical Office had recommended a model similar to the National Audit Office. However, discussions at various levels have led to the conclusion that this proposal, which requires amendments to the constitution, is impracticable. A more feasible alternative is now being considered, namely to establish the National Statistical Office as a non-ministerial public office with separate budget.

In the wake of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Bank of Mauritius (BOM) and the Central Statistics Office (CSO), working groups comprising CSO and BOM, and Ministry of Finance and Economic Empowerment where relevant, have been set up on (i) Domestic and external debt of households and Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), (ii) Improvement of financial statistics (survey of credit-giving institutions and insurance companies), (iii) Leading indicators, (iv) Trade in services, (v) Macro-economic modelling, (vi) Price indices, and (vii) Statistical and economic literacy.

Thanks to the impetus given by World Bank technical assistance, coordination and monitoring of statistical development is proceeding satisfactorily in the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, the Judiciary and the Police and Prison departments.

Advocacy for statistics

PARIS 21 has kindly accepted to prepare a high definition version of our document on advocacy for statistics for posting on the website of CSO and PARIS 21. It has also agreed to prepare a high quality printed version of the booklet and will send us 350 hard copies shortly for distribution.

Human Resource Management

The office is currently working on proposals for a performance based fair and equitable reward system to be submitted to the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms (MCSAR) for approval. An analysis of the ratings obtained by Statisticians with respect to performance in 2008 shows that the ratings are not consistent from one appraiser to another, some being lenient and some stringent. However, the rankings of Statisticians with respect to performance were broadly consistent. Furthermore, the minimum of 10 competencies on which appraisees are assessed vary from one appraisee to another. There is therefore need for some degree of standardisation to ensure consistency. The Moderating Committee has agreed that all officers would be assessed on 10 competencies out of which 5 core competencies would be common across the grade and 5 others to be agreed between appraiser and appraisee. However, all the 10 competencies should be critical for the grade. The Central Statistics Office Staff Association will be consulted on the final proposals before submission to MCSAR.

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Achievements during first Semester 2009

The achievements during the first semester of 2009 were:

- (i) Data collection for the 2007 Census of Economic Activities (CEA) has been completed. After the release of the main results of phase I of the CEA (Small establishments and itinerants units) in September 2008, a report providing detailed analysis of the results and the methodology used in the conduct of phase I was released in June this year. The data for phase II (Large establishments) are currently being published.
- (ii) An Environment-Economic Account (EEA) for 2002 covering water use and returns to the environment, energy use and atmospheric emissions, and economy-wide material flow accounts based on the results of the 2002 CEA has been compiled with the assistance of a UNDP consultant. The results will be included in the Economic and Social Indicator on Environment Statistics scheduled for August 2009 while high level summary accounts will be presented in a brochure.
- (iii) Following a technical assistance mission of a UNDP consultant earlier in May, an experimental Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) for 2005 is currently being compiled based on available data. The consultant made a series of recommendations on how to improve tourism statistics in general, and in particular on how to fill in the data gaps for an improved and complete TSA.
- (iv) A Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the Bank of Mauritius on 3 March with a view to strengthening collaboration between the two institutions, promoting quality statistics, and reducing overlapping and duplication in the collection and production of statistical information. A first meeting was held on 14 March to set out the path for the collaboration.
- (v) Two consultants were recruited under the Capacity Building Programme of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Empowerment for (a) setting up a computerised system for the compilation of National Accounts, and developing methods for estimating regional Gross Domestic Product (GDP) according to the 1993 System of National Accounts, and (b) developing a standard schedule of rates to be used as benchmarks in assessing data costs of construction works, and a series of construction price indices for non-residential buildings and civil engineering works.
- (vi) Following a technical assistance mission in January/February 2009 by a World Bank consultant, an Economic and Social Indicator (ESI) on Crime, Justice and Security statistics was prepared. The ESI, published in April 2009, covers statistics on victimisation collected by the Central Statistics Office from the Continuous Multi Purpose Household Survey as well as statistics from the Mauritius Police Force, the Judiciary, and the Mauritius Prison Services. A "Digest of Crime, Justice and Security Statistics" is being prepared and will be released by the end of July 2009.
- (vii) Following a technical assistance mission of a World Bank expert from 29 May to 5 June 2009, a poverty map is being prepared for 2001/02 on the basis of data collected from the 2000 Housing and Population Census and from the 2001/02 Household Budget Survey. A preliminary poverty map is available since June 2009 and the final version will be available by August 2009.

- (viii) Through the implementation of the e-business plan it has been possible to acquire necessary hardware and software to improve the technical infrastructure of the office. Regarding the hardware, printers, high performance PCs and laptops, and additional servers with more powerful processors have been purchased. This has resulted in achieving the ratio of one PC per officer at the CSO main office. There has also been a restructuring of the existing Server Room to accommodate a Data Centre with a centralised database and reporting system. As regards software, this office has acquired licenses for Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 17.0, ERETES (a dedicated software for National Accounts), and AUTOCAD. The existing licenses of STATA have been upgraded from 8.0 to 10.0.
- (ix) By the end of June, a prototype of an integrated system of centralised database at the CSO has been developed for the Demography Unit. Based on the latter, new application structures are being developed in the Labour and Central Business Register Units.
- (x) PARIS21 has agreed to prepare a booklet on advocacy for Mauritius, entitled “Why does Mauritius need good statistics” in collaboration with CSO.
- (xi) A National Summary Data Page (NSDP) in connection with the Special Data Dissemination Standard has been posted on the CSO website since February 2009.

International Monetary Fund (IMF) Mission Survey on Global Business Companies

Upon a request from the Government of Mauritius, in order to examine means to assist Mauritius to graduate to the Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS), a mission was undertaken by two IMF staff, Mr. John Joisce and Mr. Rainer Koehler, from 11 to 15 May 2009 to explore the avenues of including data on Global Business Companies (GBCs) in the Balance of Payment (BOP) and International Investment Position (IIP) statistics.

The mission had discussions with the Bank of Mauritius (BOM), Financial Services Commission (FSC), commercial banks and management companies. Two meetings, chaired by the Financial Secretary, were held at the Ministry of Finance and Economic Empowerment (MOFEE): one for the kick-off and the second for the wrapping-up of the mission. The major recommendations of the mission are:

- (i) value of total assets of GBCs be obtained by the FSC, as the regulatory agency, in conjunction with the BOM, as the compiling agency, together with MOFEE, as the SDDS coordinator;
- (ii) annual and quarterly surveys on GBCs be conducted jointly by the FSC and BOM;
- (iii) that a joint coordinating committee be set up comprising representatives from FSC, BOM, MOFEE and Central Statistics Office; and
- (iv) that a follow up mission be undertaken by the IMF when the results of the survey become available to assess their quality and recommend further modifications to the way the data are collected.

Technical assistance on the elaboration of a Tourism Satellite Account

In the context of the growing importance of the tourism sector and increased demand from government and other stakeholders for information to measure the real impact of the sector on the economy and for effective public policies and business operations, the Central Statistics Office (CSO) in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications has decided to set up a Tourism Satellite Account (TSA), as recommended by the World Tourism Organisation (WTO). The TSA will provide:

- (i) Macroeconomic aggregates that describe the size and the economic contribution of tourism consistent with similar aggregates for the total economy, and for other productive economic activities;
- (ii) Detailed data on tourism consumption, and a description on how this demand is met by domestic supply and imports;
- (iii) Detailed production accounts of the tourism industries, including data on employment, linkages with other productive economic activities and gross fixed capital formation; and
- (iv) A link between economic data and non-monetary information on tourism, such as number of trips (or visits), duration of stay, purpose of trip, modes of transport etc.

The services of Mr. J. Falconi, an international consultant in the field of tourism statistics has been made available to the CSO by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), to assist in the construction of the TSA and also to analyse and interpret the results. Mr. Falconi undertook a first mission to the CSO from 13 to 24 April 2009. Focus was mainly on the definition of guidelines for the elaboration of an experimental TSA and evaluation of the Mauritian tourism statistical system. By the end of the mission, the consultant made proposals on how to construct an experimental TSA for the year 2005, based mainly on the 2005 Supply and Use Table (SUT) and data from the 2006 Survey of Outgoing Tourists (SOT). This account is expected to be completed by August 2009.

Technical assistance for National Accounts

The Central Statistics Office (CSO) invited applications for Consultancy Services under the Capacity Building Programme of the Ministry Of Finance and Economic Empowerment (MOFEE) to:

- (i) set up a computerized system for more effective, efficient and timely compilation of National Accounts using the ERETES software, while ensuring consistency and coherence of the statistics.
- (ii) develop methods for estimating regional Gross Domestic Product (GDP), according to recommendations of the UN System of National accounts of 1993.

The services of Mr. Matthew Powell, Senior Consultant in Economic Statistics and Statistical Systems from Oxford Policy Management Ltd have been retained for the project. He was on a first mission at the CSO from 11 to 22 May 2009. The purpose of the mission was to take stock of the current National Accounts system, including data sources and current work procedures and also assess IT requirements. He also made a presentation on the ERETES software for staff concerned and started work to be done with respect to nomenclatures and sources of economic data to enable uploading on the ERETES system. This task will be continued by CSO staff until the next mission planned for August 2009.



Working Session with Mr. Matthew Powell, Senior Consultant in Economic Statistics and Statistical Systems, Oxford Policy Management Ltd

Preliminary discussions have also been held with National Accounts staff, regarding possible ways of deriving regional estimates of GDP and possible data sources to be used. Work will be continued during the next mission.

Workshop on Manufacturing Statistics for African Countries

The United Nations Statistical Division (UNSD) organised a four-day workshop on manufacturing Statistics in Lusaka, Zambia from 4 to 7 May 2009. The workshop was hosted by the Central Statistical Office of Zambia.

The workshop was part of UNSD's effort to increase capacity-building in the African region and to initiate a programme for the development and comparable manufacturing statistics for African countries.

The workshop was led by Mr. Ralf Becker and Mr. Gulab Singh from UNSD, and Mr. Ackim Jere and Ms. Chishuvo Gunda from Southern African Development Community (SADC) Secretariat. The African continent was represented by the 22 members' state of which Mauritius was represented by the officer-in-charge of the Industry Unit of the Central Statistics Office. Special mention should be made to Canada for its case study for the workshop and to Japan, representing the East Asia Expert Meeting on Manufacturing Statistics (EAMS).

The objective of the workshop was to have an interactive discussion on manufacturing statistics in the African region. As a first step the workshop reviewed the state of manufacturing statistics in participating African countries including scope, definition, measurement and methodology for its compilation. The purpose of developing these international recommendations was to establish a coherent and uniform measurement of industrial activities for national and international dissemination.

Each participant had to present his/her country profile and country practices in the collection and compilation of manufacturing statistics. Presentations were made by the International and Regional organisations (UNSD, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa-UNECA and SADC).

In terms of International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC) Rev.4, the scope of the industrial sector is defined to cover:

- (i) Mining and Quarrying (Section B);
- (ii) Manufacturing (Section C);
- (iii) Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply (Section D); and
- (iv) Sewerage, waste management and remediation activities (Section E).

The scope of the economic activities has been broadened compared to the international recommendations of 1990 because the activities of sewerage, waste management and remediation have been added in line with the broadening of the scope of Section E in the ISIC Rev.4.

It was agreed within the framework of the workshop to adopt the ISIC Rev.4 by 2012. UNSD data collection will be done yearly at 2 digit level and monthly at 1 digit level. Following discussion groups, a suggestive list of implementation issues for manufacturing statistics in the African region was drafted. This will be made available in the forthcoming meeting of Manufacturing Statistics.

It was a good initiative to have on the same platform many African countries. Participants could learn of all difficulties existing in the collection and compilation of manufacturing statistics. Hopefully these discussions will contribute to a regional strategy in harmonising data collection, compilation and revision policies, quality standards, and the extension of scope and detail of the manufacturing statistics in the African region.

National Accounts Workshop for SADC Countries

The United Nations Statistical Division (UNSD) organised a four-day workshop on National Accounts in Windhoek, Namibia from 16 – 19 June 2009. The workshop was hosted by the Central Bureau of Statistics of Namibia.

The workshop was part of UNSD's effort to increase statistical capacity-building in the region and as such relates to the framework of the project "Strengthening statistical capacity building in support of progress towards the Internationally Agreed Developments Goals in the Southern African Development Community region".

The workshop was led by Mr. Herman Smith, Chief, National Accounts Section of UNSD and participants were from United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), International Monetary Fund (IMF), African Development Bank (AFDB), South African Reserve Bank (SARB), Southern African Development Community (SADC) and SADC member states countries. Mauritius was represented by one officer from the Quarterly National Accounts unit of the Central Statistics Office.

The objective of the workshop was to have an interactive discussion on National Accounts issues brought about by the update of the System of National Accounts (SNA) and revision of the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC). Matters discussed included, timeliness, reliability of source data, benchmarking, rebasing, volume measures and back casting in view of the update.

It is foreseen that these discussions will contribute in the formulation of a regional strategy to harmonise data collection, compilation and revision policies, quality standards and the extension of the scope and detail of the national accounts in the region.

SADC member states participants made presentations on their country's national accounts compilation and dissemination practices, with emphasis on sources and methods. Presentations were made by International and Regional organisations with emphasis on the following topics:

- (i) Main changes from the 1993 SNA to 2008 SNA
- (ii) Overview of the SNA
- (iii) The main challenges in the implementation of the SNA
- (iv) Implementation strategy for the 2008 SNA including ISIC Revision 4

Following group discussions, a list of implementation issues was proposed for the implementation of the 2008 SNA in the SADC region.

Workshop on Improving Statistics on International Trade in Services

International trade and investment in services are an increasingly important part of global commerce. Advances in information and telecommunication technologies have expanded the scope of services that can be traded cross-border. More and more people are travelling abroad to consume tourism, education and medical services, and to supply services ranging from construction to software development. Trade and foreign direct investment (FDI) in services have grown faster than in goods over the past decade and a half.

Following the entry into force of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), there has been an increasing demand for detailed, relevant and internationally comparable statistical information on trade in services. Trade negotiators require statistics, possibly by mode of supply, as a guide to negotiate specific commitments and to monitor their economic impact for each type of service.



Opening of Workshop by Dr. Gianni ZANINI (right), Lead Economist from World Bank Institute and Mr. Wamkele MENE (left), Director of the Department of Trade and Industry of South Africa

This workshop was jointly organised by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) of South Africa, World Bank Institute (WBI), World Bank Research Department and World Trade Organisation (WTO) from 15 to 16 June 2009 in Durban, South Africa. The main objectives of the workshop were to:

- (i) give an introduction (awareness) to Trade in Services Statistics to statisticians, economists and

- trade negotiators of countries which are not compiling them;
- (ii) improve current system of data collection for countries compiling Trade in Services Statistics; and
- (iii) learn and share knowledge from country experiences.

Twenty-two participants attended this workshop and Mauritius was represented by one statistician from the Central Statistics Office and one analyst from the Bank of Mauritius. The international resource persons for the workshop were Dr. Gianni ZANINI and Dr. Aaditya MATTOO from WBI, Mr. Joscelyn from WTO, Ms. Jennifer KONCZ from US Bureau of Economic Analysis (USBEA), Ms. Karen McGUIGAN from Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and Mr. Juan EDUARDO from Chilean Central Bank.

Trade in Services is not just trade in the conventional sense – where a product is produced in one country and sold to consumers in another country – but it is also the whole range of international transactions, including foreign investment and international movement of people, as consumers or providers of services. The range of the services covered by the WTO GATS is:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| (i) Business services | (vii) Financial services |
| (ii) Communication services | (viii) Health-related and social services |
| (iii) Construction services | (ix) Tourism and travel-related services |
| (iv) Distribution services | (x) Recreational, cultural, and sporting services |
| (v) Educational services | (xi) Transport services |
| (vi) Environment services | (xii) Other services not elsewhere included |

How are services traded? Distinction can be made between services that necessarily require physical proximity between the user and the provider and those that do not. For many services – whose number is growing with the development of electronic means of delivery – proximity is not necessary though it may enhance the quality of the service. A variety of financial, entertainment, information and communication services can be produced in one country and delivered, either electronically or stored in some medium (paper, disk, cassette), to consumers in another country.

A number of services, however, require proximity between the consumer and producer, one of whom must move to make an international transaction possible. Such services include: construction services, where the supplier moves to the location of the supplier; and hair cuts or surgical operations, where either the supplier or the consumer moves. The movement of the supplier could involve the flow of capital, i.e. FDI, labour or both.

Four modes of supply: As stressed in GATS, international trade in services can take place through 4 modes of supply as follows:

- (i) **Mode 1** - Cross-border: services supplied from the territory of one country into the territory of another (only the service crosses the border).
- (ii) **Mode 2** - Consumption abroad: services supplied in the territory of one country to the consumers of another.
- (iii) **Mode 3** - Commercial presence (FDI): services supplied through any type of business or professional establishment of one country in the territory of another.

- (iv) **Mode 4** - Presence of natural persons (labour movement): services supplied by nationals of one country in the territory of another. This mode includes both independent service suppliers and employees of the services supplier of another country.

The **Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services** (MSITS), also known as the Yellow Book, provides guidelines and recommendations on how to use and develop sources to measure trade in services. It expands the definition of international trade in services by recommending the measurement of services supplied by foreign affiliates, within the new framework of Foreign Affiliates Trade in Services (FATS) statistics. The guidelines of MSITS – once implemented by a large number of countries – will provide statisticians, economists and trade negotiators with data on trade in services that would enable more pertinent statistical and economic analyses and improved information for negotiations. There is also a handbook called “A Handbook of International Trade in Services”, published in 2002, which provides a comprehensive introduction to the subject.

FATS statistics are an important analytical tool to understand the phenomenon of international operations, and to monitor the performance of the foreign affiliates through which they are conducted. MSITS suggests compiling the following economic variables as measures of foreign affiliate activity:

- (i) sales (turnover) and/or output
- (ii) employment
- (iii) value added
- (iv) exports and imports of goods and services
- (v) number of enterprises
- (vi) other variables

Training of Trainers Workshop on the Advanced (Post Graduate) Diploma in Official Statistics for SADC countries

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) in collaboration with the European Union (UN) organised a Training of Trainers workshop on the Advanced (Post Graduate) Diploma in Official Statistics for SADC Member States in Gaborone from 25-29 May 2009. This workshop is a follow-up of the two workshops held in Zanzibar in May 2007 and in Johannesburg in November 2007.

The workshop was officially opened by Mr. Ackim Jere from the SADC Secretariat. In his opening speech, Mr. Jere mentioned that under the auspices of the SADC Regional Statistical Training Project, two sets of training materials have been developed; the first one was the Regional Model syllabus for a Basic Course in Statistics prepared by the University of Reading for sub-professional staff within National Statistical Systems of SADC Member States and the second one was the standardised training materials developed by the ICON INSTITUT Public Sector GmbH (Germany) for the Programme of Short Courses and Seminars targeted at management and professional staff working within National Statistical Systems of SADC countries. The main focus of the workshop was on the presentation of the standardised training materials and whether one would acquire a SADC Advanced (Post Graduate) Diploma in Official Statistics after following these short courses is still under study.

The main objectives of this regional workshop were to:

- (i) introduce trainers from National Statistical systems/Statistics Training Institutions in the SADC region to the syllabus/training materials developed by ICON INSTITUT Public Sector GmbH (Germany);
- (ii) enable trainers to choose between different modalities of use of the syllabus/training materials so that the selected option suits their own circumstances;
- (iii) provide guidance on planning and gathering resources for implementing modules of the syllabus/training materials;
- (iv) provide guidance on how to adapt and expand the syllabus/training materials;
- (v) initiate the evaluation by the users of the syllabus/training materials to identify changes that will improve the training materials; and
- (vi) facilitate the understanding of how to effectively use statistics and to address real problems in relation to national and regional development and integration programmes.

Nineteen representatives from all the 14 SADC countries represented the National Statistics Offices and/or the Universities/National Training Centres. The Mauritian team comprised a lecturer from the University of Mauritius and one statistician from the Central Statistics Office. The facilitators for the workshop were Dr Michel Grun-Rehomme, Lecturer from the University of Paris 2 and Dr Yeko Alifas Mwanga, Facilitator, Makerere University.

The training materials comprise 7 short courses namely:

A1 - Statistical and Survey Methods

A2 - National Accounts

A3 - Demographic and Social Statistics

A4 - Agriculture and Environment Statistics

B1 - Analysis, Interpretation and Dissemination of Official Statistics

B2 - Statistical Geography

B3 - ICT processes for statistics

During the delivery of the materials, it was observed that the contents of the short courses were independent of the regional Model Syllabus for a Basic Course in Statistics. Participants had the opportunity to develop familiarity with the contents of the short courses and also engage in discussions about how these materials could be improved and adapted. At the closing of the workshop, the facilitators concluded that the training materials would be improved according to the recommendations made by the participants and would be posted on the website of SADC.

Performance Management System (PMS)

Proposals from the PMS Moderating Committee to improve the rating system

Using the right rating system – and using it properly – is critical to the success of a performance appraisal system. Organisations have the moral and legal obligations to assess the performance of their employees in an objective, consistent and fair manner.

Currently, the rating system for performance appraisals as recommended in the PMS Guidelines

circulated by the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms is as follows:

- (i) the achievement of individual performance targets and the competencies demonstrated on the job are measured on a 5-point discrete scale; and
- (ii) overall work performance is measured on a 5-point continuous scale.

The advisability of reviewing the current PMS rating system to obtain improved results from the performance reviews of individual officers has recently been discussed by the PMS Moderating Committee of the Central Statistics Office.

The proposals considered by the Moderating Committee relate to the measurement of individual performance, as well as competencies demonstrated, on a scale other than the 5-point discrete scale. The following proposals were made:

- (i) a continuous 5-point scale;
- (ii) a 5-point scale with discrete midpoint values; and
- (iii) a 7 or 9-point scale.

The respective strengths and weaknesses of the above proposals were assessed by the Monitoring Committee. During discussions, it was pointed out that there is evidence from research work to suggest that a continuous 5-point scale or a 5-point scale with discrete midpoints would give rise to high measurement errors of unreliability and leniency. As far as the 7 or the 9-point scale is concerned, developing such a scale would require the mobilisation of a significant amount of resources in terms of time and human efforts, particularly since additional suitable definitions would have to be worked out for the additional points. Although the scales proposed above would give more flexibility to appraisers, it is considered that their limitations would outweigh their benefits.

The Moderating Committee also considered the possibility of defining in more elaborate terms, and with specific reference to tasks/standards achieved or not achieved, the different levels of performance and results associated with the corresponding ratings as laid down in the PMS Guidelines. The aim is to ensure that performance is assessed in a more consistent manner, and also to provide officers with precise feedback on their performance so that they can make the necessary efforts and contribute more effectively to the achievement of organisational objectives. In order for employees to improve, they need to know where they have gone wrong and what remedial action they should take. Telling employees, for example, that their performance and the results they have achieved frequently do not meet the standards and expectations of the job requirements and objectives may not be sufficient. More detailed information may have to be given to the employees to make the remarks more meaningful. After discussions, the Committee came to the conclusion that although the proposed arrangements could enhance the effectiveness of the performance appraisal system, the exercise would be too laborious and demanding.

The Monitoring Committee is exploring other avenues for improving the current rating system with a view to rendering the performance appraisal system more transparent, fair and equitable.

Progress – e-Business Plan

Phase 1 of the implementation of the e-business plan of the CSO is being driven by the consultant, Mr. V. Madhow recruited as IT Project Manager for the period October 2008 to November 2009. This phase comprises three main IT projects and their progress of work covering the period January to June 2009 are given below.

Project 1: Modernising IT Environment

This project consists of innovating the IT infrastructure at the CSO by renovating the IT equipment, mainly through the acquisition of up-to-date and high performance PCs and Servers while increasing the accessibility to network facilities such as Internet and Intranet. During the first semester of 2009, with the launch of two tenders some 60 PCs, 22 Laptops and 11 laser printers (including one A3 colour high speed printer) have been purchased. This has resulted in achieving the ratio of one PC per officer at the CSO main office.

Moreover, to improve significantly the networking at the CSO, 5 additional servers with latest technology have already been purchased and awaiting final delivery. The extension of 60 additional data points on and above the existing ones have already been installed and are expected to be operational in the coming days. The network bandwidth is being increased by 10 fold from 100 MB to 1 Gigabit to improve the time of accessing information through the network.

It is also good to note that, to equip our officers in the performance of their statistical work, 22 licenses for several modules of SPSS 17.0, 5 licenses of ERETES (dedicated software for National Accounts), one additional license of AUTOCAD and upgrades of the 7 licenses of STATA from 8.0 to 10.0 have already been acquired. It is to be noted that some of the above-mentioned equipments were targeted to be acquired in the next phase of the implementation of the e-business plan but were finally purchased in the first phase with the view of speeding up the e-business plan project.

Project 2: Developing New Application Architecture

The final product of this project is to have an integrated system of centralised database at the CSO which will not only facilitate accessibility of information by producers and users of statistical information, but will also provide a framework to ensure that data generated by the system are consistent with one another. To build such a system, the application architecture of databases in each and every unit of CSO will have to be standardised, while ensuring that concepts, classifications etc. are harmonised in all units concerned.

By the end of phase 1 of this project, four main units of the CSO, namely Labour, Central Business Register (CBR), External Trade and Consumer Price Index (CPI) will be equipped with the standard New Application Architecture.

Project 3: Data Capture through Scanning

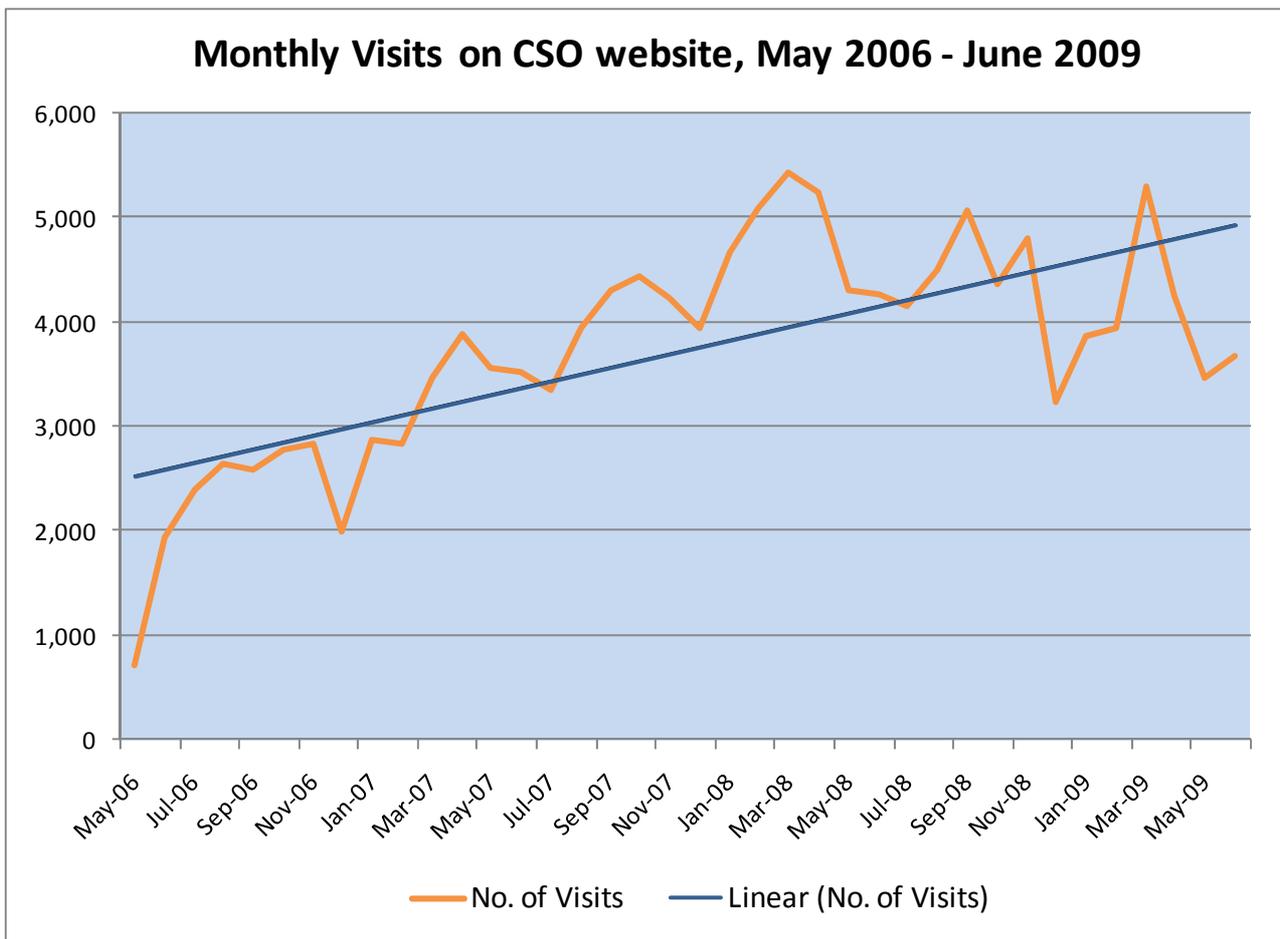
This project aims at using state-of-the-art technology for data capture and processing of census questionnaires. Thus through this project the CSO is looking forward of making use of Optical Character Recognition (OCR), Intelligent Character Recognition (ICR) and Optical Mark

Recognition (OMR) and appropriate scanners for processing questionnaires of the forthcoming Housing and Population Census.

During the first few months of 2009, our IT Project Manager evaluated the feasibility of using such a technology in the Mauritian context, especially for the Census. The result obtained by means of a “proof of concept” was that such a technology could be successfully applied for census. This triggered the launch of tenders for outsourcing the project and by the end of June 2009, the bids received have already been evaluated and the best evaluated successful bidder was selected for undertaking a pilot exercise.

Visits on the CSO Website

The number of visits on the CSO website was 11,392 during the second quarter of 2009, representing a decrease of 13.1 % from 13,106 in the first quarter of 2009.



From the chart above, it is observed that the number of visits on the CSO website has an increasing trend. Trend analysis shows that the number of visits has doubled during the 3-year period (May 2006 to June 2009). The fluctuation by month is highly influenced by seasonality. Usually during a year, visits are highest during April and October and lowest in July and December.

Important Indicators released during the Second Quarter of 2009

GDP Growth Rate

Latest information gathered on the various sectors of the economy indicates that growth of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for 2008 was 5.3%, same as estimated in March 2009.

On the basis of information gathered on key sectors of the economy, and measures announced in the additional stimulus package and the last budget, the 2.5% growth for 2009 forecasted in March 2009 is maintained.

Consumer Price Index

The Consumer Price Index (CPI), which stood at 116.1 in March 2009, registered a net increase of 0.9% during the period April to June 2009 to reach 117.1 in June 2009.

The inflation rate for the financial year 2008/09 works out to 6.9% compared to 8.8% for the financial year 2007/08.

External Trade

During the first quarter of 2009, total exports reached Rs 14,262 million, representing a decrease of 0.3% over the corresponding period of 2008, mostly explained by a decline in the exports of “Articles of apparel & clothing accessories”. Total imports for the same period fell by 17.5% to Rs 25,392 million. The trade deficit for the first quarter of 2009 worked out to Rs 11,130 million, representing a decrease of 32.4% over the figure of Rs 16,465 million registered in the first quarter of 2008.

For the year 2009, total exports are forecasted at around Rs 63,000 million and imports at Rs 118,000 million. The trade deficit would be around Rs 55,000 million, 14.3% lower than the previous year’s deficit.

Unemployment

The unemployment rate for the first quarter of 2009 is estimated at 8.0% compared to 6.2% at the previous quarter and 8.2% at the corresponding quarter of 2008.

Unemployment rate for the year 2009 is projected at 8.0%.

Tourist arrivals

Tourist arrivals decreased by 9.9% from 261,494 in the first quarter of 2008 to 235,699 in the first quarter of 2009. Gross tourism receipts for the first quarter of 2009 were estimated at Rs 10,265 million, that is 14.1% lower than that of 2008.

The forecast of tourist arrivals for the year 2009 will be around 835,000 (-10.3% over 2008) and tourism receipts will be around Rs 38,173 million (-7.4% over 2008).

Producer Price Index- Manufacturing

The Producer Price Index which stood at 176.2 in December 2008 decreased by 3.1% during the first quarter of 2009 to reach 170.7 in March 2009. This is mainly explained by a fall of 5.7% in the sub-index “Manufacture of food products, beverages and tobacco”.

The decline of 5.7% in the sub-index “Manufacture of food products, beverages and tobacco” was due to lower prices of “Manufacture of dairy products” (-1.9%), “Manufacture of grain mill products” (-42.0%), “Manufacture of vegetable and animal oils and fats” (-6.5%) and “Manufacture of prepared animal feed” (-5.8%).

New Publications received

The following publications have been acquired during the second quarter of 2009.

Local Publications

Reports

- 1. Civil Status Division**
Annual Report, 2009
- 2. Industrial and Vocational Training Board**
Annual Report, 2006-2007
- 3. Bank of Mauritius**
Inflation Report, 2009
- 4. Mauritius Chamber of Agriculture**
Annual Report, 2007-2008
- 5. Civil Service Family Protection Scheme Board**
Annual Report, 2008
- 6. Mauritius Sugar Industry Research Institute**
Annual Report, 2008
- 7. National Human Rights Commission**
Annual Report, 2008
- 8. Development Bank of Mauritius**
Annual Report, 2008

Foreign Publications

Periodicals

- 1. INSEE**
 - (i) Economie de la Reunion, April 2009
 - (ii) Economie et Statistique, No. 415-416, 2008
- 2. World Bank**
World Bank Research Digest, 2009

Trainings/meetings attended by Staff during the Second Quarter of 2009

(i) Overseas

Name	Programme	Country	Period
Mr. G. Chandydial	Workshop on Manufacturing Statistics for African countries	Zambia	4 to 7 May
Ms. R. Soborun	Training of Trainers Workshop on the Advanced Diploma in Official Statistics for SADC countries	Botswana	25 to 29 May
Mr. B. Unmar	Workshop on Improving Statistics on International Trade in Services	South Africa	15 to 16 June
Mr.K. Nardeosingh	National Accounts for SADC countries	Namibia	16 to 19 June
Ms. Y. Cassimally & Ms. N. Guillaume	Justice and Security Statistics	Kenya	22 to 24 June

(ii) Local

Seminar/Workshop

Name	Programme	Organising Institution	Period
Ms. P. Bhoobeechurn	Refresher Course in Information & Communication Technology for Confidential Secretaries & Senior Word Processing Operators	Ministry of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms (MCSAR)	16 to 19 Jan
Mr. A. Sookun	Update of Metadata Assimilation on Clearinghouse Initiatives	Meteorological Services	12 May
Mr. B. Unmar	Training in Effective Communication Skills	MCSAR	18 to 20 May
Ms. S. Nunhuck, Ms. R. Soborun & Mr. M. Dawoonauth	Training in Effective Communication Skills	MCSAR	16 to 18 June
Ms. L. Bodha	Induction course for Receptionists/ Telephone Operators	MCSAR	15 & 19 June

SADC Training Pack

Nineteen officers of the Central Statistics Office followed a course on “Module H6 – Sampling Concepts in Survey Works” from the SADC Pack organised by this office and the University of Mauritius. The officers are:

Mr. C. Arianaick	Ms. C. Rughoobur
Ms. C. Bandinah	Ms. R. Soborun
Ms. N. Gujadhur	Mr. A. Sookun
Mr. K. Bheecarry	Ms. H. Ramlukon
Ms. S. Geemul	Mr. R. Mungur
Ms. F. Koussa	Mr. K. Nardeosingh
Ms. R. Moraby	Mr. E. Lukshmudu
Ms. S. Nunhuck	Ms. F. Victor
Mr. L. Persand	Ms. R. Fanor
Ms. K. Pothegadoo	

Staffing Development

Two officers of the Central Statistics Office have obtained their permanent transfer to other institutions as follows:

- (i) Ms. Yasheeka MOLAYE-SEEBORUTH, Statistical Officer, to the Grand Port – Savanne District Council with effect from 20 April 2009; and
- (ii) Mr. Amardeepkumar HAULKHORY, Statistician, to the Bank of Mauritius with effect from 24 April 2009.

Customer Care

One of the functions of the Publication Unit, located at the ground floor of the Central Statistics Office (CSO), LIC Centre, John Kennedy Street, Port Louis, is to provide guidance to visitors who come to this office in search of statistical information.

The unit receives on a daily basis visitors ranging from students to professional researchers. The table below shows the number of persons that visited CSO during the first and second quarters of 2009. Among various areas of interest of the visitors, the most popular ones are National Accounts, Labour, Demography and Price Indices.

Visitors by Area of Interest, 1st Quarter 2009 - 2nd Quarter 2009				
Area of Interest	1st Quarter 2009		2nd Quarter 2009	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
<i>Economic Statistics:</i>				
National Accounts	148	37.9	29	11.9
International Travel & Tourism	19	4.9	43	17.7
Education	19	4.9	8	3.3
External Trade	20	5.1	14	5.8
Other	24	6.1	29	11.9
<i>Social & Demographic Statistics:</i>				
Labour Force, Employment and Unemployment	51	13.0	40	16.5
Population & Vital Statistics	45	11.5	41	16.9
Other	9	2.3	12	4.9
<i>Price Indices:</i>				
Price Indices	40	10.2	4	1.6
<i>Other Statistics:</i>				
Other Statistics	16	4.1	23	9.5
Total	391	100.0	243	100.0

Annual General Meeting of CSO Staff Association

The Central Statistical Office Staff Association (CSOSA) held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 1 April 2009 at 14.00 hrs on the 5th floor of the LIC Centre, Port Louis. The meeting was chaired by the President, Mr D. Venkatasawmy in the presence of the Director of Statistics, Mr H. Bundhoo.

The President spoke about the world financial crisis and the recent events in the United States of America which have confirmed that globalisation has reduced the world to a tiny place where the interdependence of economies has never before been so evident. The greatest threat will be on employment resulting from the weakening of the major sectors of the economy. The year 2009 and coming ones will definitely be difficult to our country. Moreover, the new Employment Rights Act has made it easier for employers to fire employees without the need for proper justification.

2008 Pay Research Bureau (PRB) Report

At office level the two main events were the publication of the 2008 PRB Report and discussions regarding the conversion of the office into an autonomous agency. The Union has submitted a memorandum for consideration by the PRB in its report on Errors and Omission. The main points of the memorandum are:

- (i) There should not be two categories of Statisticians.
- (ii) Temporary Statistical Officers need not necessary have passed the Ordinary Certificate of the Royal Statistical Society (RSS) for confirmation in their appointment.
- (iii) Appointment in the grade of Principal Statistical Officer be made by promotion of officers in the grade of SSO.
- (iv) The salary of the following grades be extended as follows:
 - Statistical Officers up to the point of Rs 25,600
 - Senior Statistical Officers up to the point of Rs 31,750
 - Principal Statistical Officers up to the point of Rs 35,000



Annual General Meeting of Central Statistical Office Staff Association held on 1 April 2009

National Statistical Agency

The Union pointed out that the Steering Committee has recommended that the Statistical Agency remains within government and functions as the National Audit Office.

Filling of vacancies at CSO

The CSOSA has been pressing for the filling of vacancies, on existing schemes of service, at all grades as the situation is causing much hardship on the staff.

Staff Attendance

A request has been made for the implementation of flexible hours of attendance at the office. Management is agreeable to the request provided there is productive work and after members have expressed their views through a survey.

Training of staff

The Union has welcomed the running of the training course using the SADC Training Pack for the Statistical Officers, but suggested that arrangement could be made to end the courses around 17.00 hrs.

Recruitment of fieldstaff

The CSOSA made a request to the management that recruitment of fieldstaff for censuses and surveys should be made on the basis of experience and merit. A request was made to management to keep CSOSA informed of the recruitment policy for the forthcoming Housing and Population Census.

Annual General Meeting of Central Statistical Office Welfare Association (CSOWA)

The CSOWA held its Annual General Meeting on 24 June 2008. The President pointed out that many activities have not been organised in year 2008 due to a low participation of members. The 2008 end-of-year party was held at 'Le Coco Beach Hotel' and the participation turnover has improved compared to previous years. He made a request that the collaboration of all members is needed such that we can move ahead with activities.



Annual General Meeting of Central Statistical Office Welfare Association held on 24 June 2009

Tips on IT

(by Ali Hoolash)

My Top Ten Favourite Websites

The idea for this article came when I was cleaning the cluttered list of bookmarks in my internet browser at home. Coming up with 'Top Ten' lists always raises a few eyebrows as there is a lot of subjectivity in this exercise. Other internet users might come up with a completely different list or a few of mine might make it to their list too but as I said before, it's all about how much you relate to the websites mentioned herein. However, that doesn't undermine a boring read! After going through my list, you may well discover websites that might become your favourites too! I also need to point out that the websites listed below are not being listed in any order of importance – they all rank equally in my bookmark list.

1 Google (**www.google.com**) – Can we surf the web without Google? In most cases, I can't! This is my favourite website for doing online research work. Be it preparing for your exams, looking for places to download the latest movie trailers, finding the best bargains for a particular product, Google's the webpage to start! Explore Google further and you will discover a treasure trove of lovely Google products. Go for Google Books (<http://books.google.com/>) if you would like to read an extract of a particular book. Chances are great that Google Books have already scanned the front cover, the table of contents, the back cover and a few chapters for you to enjoy! It's just like entering the local library and leafing through the pages of a book from the shelves so as to decide if it is worth your money! Feeling adventurous today? No problem, simply go to Google Earth and travel the world in the comfort of your armchair! It can't get better than that, can it? Well, it can! There are lots of other Google products and I'll leave it to you to explore the website and discover them.

2 YouTube (**www.youtube.com**) – So you want to visually learn how to fry an egg? Or maybe you want to learn Michael Jackson's moonwalk steps? What about watching the goals you missed last night due to a boring appointment you couldn't avoid? YouTube's the place! Endless videos are available at the click of a button. It's so viral that you might spend hours on this website.

3 Amazon (**www.amazon.com**) – For the uninitiated, the famous nature reserve might come to mind! Well, I will disappoint you here as amazon.com is all about books and...books! I love books! And you should, too! It will be surprising if this website does not make it in the Top Ten of book lovers. If you want to read the synopsis of a book, its review by buyers or if you want to just look around at the latest best sellers, this is the website that has it all. I have purchased a lot books through Amazon and it is one of the best shopping experiences that I have. The website is a reference in online secure transactions and giving away your credit card number here is not synonymous to sleepless nights.

4 The Economist (**www.economist.com**) – This one might bring a wry smile on a few faces but believe me, read a few of its online articles and if you like good writing (who doesn't?), you will appreciate the level of writing and the exquisite style used by the writers. And the articles are very informative too!

5 Life hacker (**www.lifehacker.com**) – who doesn't want to get things done in a way that actually saves time? Lifehacker is the website where you will get all the digital knowledge and life knowledge, all in one place.

6 Stumble Upon (**www.stumbleupon.com**) - Thousands of people who share your interests and hobbies will point you to the sites that they personally recommend. The internet just got smaller! If you are in a more adventurous mood, just 'stumble it!' – look for the 'StumbleIt!' button on the home page of the website. A click will simply load random websites and you will be amazed at what you will discover during this adventurous session. As the name implies, you never know on what you may stumble upon!

7 Online Conversion (www.onlineconversion.com) - How many ounces are there in 650 ml? How many meters is a 40 yard lawn? Think of any conversion and just carry it on this website. Probably a website that you will log onto only when you need it but priceless nonetheless in terms of help that it provides. Home pastry makers and students can't go wrong here!

8 How Stuff Works (www.howstuffworks.com) – As someone puts it, 'I wish I had teachers that were as clear and vivid as this website'! Learn how a microwave works, how aeroplanes work, how vaccines work... simply learn how nearly everything works! You can't get a website as entertaining as this one and if you still have that childhood awry look when you learned why the sea is blue, you will love this website!

9 Epinions (www.epinions.com) – “Real people making real comments on real purchases”. The latter sets the tone for this website. If you are in a shopping spree, this is the place to go before opening your wallet! You can't go wrong with your shopping homework here – DVD players, Cameras, HDTVs...you name it!

10 The Internet Movie Database (www.imdb.com) – Commonly known as IMDB, it contains everything you could possibly want to know about any movie out there. Before borrowing the next movie from your video club, read the reviews online at IMDB. Just try to avoid the spoilers though; anyway the website do tell you that clicking on a particular link will lead to spoilers.

Happy Surfing! See you in the next issue!