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Dear Reader,

Welcome to the 10th newsletter of the service contract under the IPA 2022 Multi-Beneficiary Programme. This edition highlights several recent activities that continue to support the strengthening of statistical systems in partner countries and their alignment with the standards of the European Statistical System.

The first two months of 2026 were marked, in addition to the usual activities on statistical projects and technical assistance activities, by valuable capacity-building initiatives as well as the start of the third round of traineeships for 18 trainees, 7 at Eurostat and 11 in the EU MSs. A specialised training course on temporal disaggregation and benchmarking in JDemetra+ provided participants with practical knowledge of advanced time series methods used in the production of high-frequency statistics. In parallel, a study visit to the National Statistics Institute of Spain (INE) enabled experts from Albania and Serbia to exchange their experiences on the development and compilation of Regional Accounts and to learn from Spain’s experience with the latest benchmark revision.

We hope you will enjoy reading this newsletter on progress achieved under the IPA 2022 service contract.

Happy reading!

The ICON Team

Snapshot: Strengthening Statistical Methods and Regional Accounts Capacities

At the beginning of 2026, the IPA 2022 service contract continued to support statistical capacity building in partner countries through targeted training and knowledge exchange activities. Two important initiatives were implemented in this period, focusing on advanced statistical methodologies and the development of Regional Accounts.

The first activity was the training course “From Annual to Quarterly to Monthly Data: Introduction to Temporal Disaggregation and Benchmarking in JDemetra+.” The three-day course provided participants with both theoretical foundations and practical applications related to temporal disaggregation, benchmarking, balancing techniques, and statistical reconciliation of time series systems. Participants were introduced to the functionalities of JDemetra+ and its plugins, enabling them to apply methods used to transform lower-frequency data into higher-frequency series while maintaining statistical consistency. The course combined lectures with hands-on sessions, allowing participants to practice the application of temporal disaggregation and regression-based methods within the software environment.

The course concluded with participant presentations and a discussion session, fostering exchange of experiences and reinforcing practical understanding of the methodologies covered.



Training course “From Annual to Quarterly to Monthly Data: Introduction to Temporal Disaggregation and Benchmarking in JDemetra+” from 18 to 20 February 2026 in Cologne, Germany,



Participants from Albania and Serbia together with experts from INE Spain during the SP 1.5 study visit from 24 to 26 February 2026 in Madrid

A second important activity was a study visit to the National Statistics Institute of Spain (INE) organised under SP 1.5 on Regional accounts. Representatives from the Institute of Statistics of the Republic of Albania (INSTAT) and the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (SORS) participated in a three-day visit focusing on the compilation and development of Regional Accounts. The visit aimed to strengthen capacities in producing geographically detailed economic statistics aligned with the requirements of the European System of Accounts (ESA). During the visit, experts from INE shared their experience in implementing the Benchmark Revision 2024, including challenges encountered, methodological solutions, and the revision of time series back to 2000.

The programme also covered Spain’s approach to producing key regional indicators such as Gross Value Added (GVA), employment, compensation of employees, gross fixed capital formation (GFCF), and household disposable income. In addition, participants were introduced to the metadata and methodological frameworks used for key regional accounts tables and learned about methods applied by INE to assess and ensure data quality. The exchange provided valuable insights into practical solutions and methodological approaches that can support further development of regional economic statistics in Albania and Serbia.

Both activities contributed to the broader objective of the IPA 2022 programme: strengthening statistical systems in partner countries through knowledge transfer, methodological alignment, and enhanced cooperation with experienced institutions within the European Statistical System.

1. Statistical Projects (SPs)

Work carried out in January – February 2026

Work planned for March - April 2026

SP 1.1 GOVERNMENT FINANCE STATISTICS AND EXCESSIVE DEFICIT PROCEDURE (GFS/EDP) XK*

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2nd expert meeting with Eurostat • Help desk support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalization of 1st Interim report • Help desk support |
|---|--|

SP 1.3 NATIONAL ACCOUNTS - METHODOLOGY AL, BA, XK, ME, MK, RS, TR

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved 1st Interim reports for BA and TR • Help desk support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2nd expert missions to MK and RS • 3rd expert mission to XK • 2nd additional expert mission to BA • 3rd expert meeting with Eurostat • Help desk support |
|--|--|

SP 1.4 NATIONAL ACCOUNTS – TRANSMISSION PROGRAMMES AL, BA, XK, ME, MK, RS, TR

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st additional expert mission to ME • 2nd additional expert mission to MK | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalization of 1st Interim reports for AL, XK • Help desk support |
|--|--|

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence

- Approved 1st Interim reports for MK, ME, RS and TR
- Help desk support

SP 1.5 REGIONAL ACCOUNTS

AL, RS, TR

- 2nd Study visit to INE Spain (AL and RS only)
- Help desk support
- 3rd expert meeting with Eurostat (AL only)
- Finalization of 1st Interim reports for AL, RS and TR
- Help desk support

SP 1.6 SECTOR ACCOUNTS

AL, XK, ME, MK, RS, TR

- 2nd additional expert mission to MK
- Approved 1st Interim reports for AL, XK, MK, ME, RS and TR
- Help desk support
- 3rd expert meeting with Eurostat
- Help desk support

SP 1.7 SUPPLY, USE AND INPUT-OUTPUT TABLES (SUIOTs)

AL, BA, XK, ME, RS, TR

- 1st additional expert missions to XK and MK
- Help desk support
- Help desk support

SP 1.9 FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT (FDI)

BA, XK

- 2nd expert meeting with Eurostat
- Help desk support
- Help desk support

SP 2.1 HARMONISED INDICES OF CONSUMER PRICES, HOUSE PRICE INDEX (HCIP/HPI)

BA, XK

- 1st additional expert mission to XK
- Help desk support
- Help desk support

SP 2.2 PRICE STATISTICS - PURCHASING POWER PARITIES (PPP)

BA, XK

- Submitted 1st Interim reports for BA and XK
- Help desk support
- Help desk support
- Drafting of the 2025 PPP inventory document by XK

SP 3.1 BUSINESS REGISTERS

BA

- Help desk support
- Help desk support

SP 3.2 SHORT-TERM BUSINESS STATISTICS: IMPROVEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE EUROPEAN BUSINESS STATISTICS REGULATION

BA, XK

- Help desk support
- Help desk support
- Creating a price database (incl. composite price indices/deflators) for retail trade (G47) and wholesale trade (G45, G46) for XK

SP 3.3 TRANSPORT STATISTICS

BA, XK

- Help desk support
- Help desk support
- 2nd SP Workshop



SP 3.6 ENERGY STATISTICS

XK

- Help desk support
- Finalization of Work plan and SP Service contract
- Work on development of a Quality Report and Survey on Energy Consumption in the Service Sector

SP 3.7 STRUCTURAL BUSINESS STATISTICS / BUSINESS DEMOGRAPHY

XK

- Preparation of the Work plan
- Finalization of Work plan and SP Service contract

SP 4.1 LABOUR FORCE SURVEY (LFS)

XK

- Help desk support
- Help desk support

SP 4.2 SURVEY ON INCOME AND LIVING CONDITIONS (EU-SILC)

BA, XK

- Help desk support
- Finalization of SP Service contract with BA
- 2nd expert mission to XK

SP 4.3 SOCIAL PROTECTION (ESSPROS)

XK

- Help desk support
- 5th expert mission to XK
- Help desk support

SP 4.9 LABOUR COST INDEX (LCI)

BA, XK

- Help desk support
- Training on JDemetra to BA
- Help desk support

SP 5.5 ENVIRONMENTAL ACCOUNTS

BA, XK

- Help desk support
- 1st additional expert mission to XK
- Help desk support

SP 5.6 WASTE STATISTICS

BA, XK

- Help desk support
- Finalization of the SP Service contract with BA
- Help desk support

SP 5.7 WATER STATISTICS

BA, XK

- On-line consultation with BA and XK
- Help desk support

SP 6.1 QUALITY MANAGEMENT

BA, XK

- Help desk support
- Study visit to ISTAT
- Help desk support

SP 6.3 COMMUNICATION

AL, BA, XK, MK, ME, TR

- Signed SP service contracts with XK, MK and TR
- Finalization of the SP Service contracts with AL, BA and ME

SP 7.2 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

BA, XK

- On-line consultations with PCs
- Help desk support



2. Upcoming activities for March and April 2026

Partner Country	Statistical project / Topic	Type	Date
MK	SP 1.3 NAM	2 nd expert mission	16 – 20 March 2026, Skopje, North Macedonia
RS	SP 1.3 NAM	3 rd expert mission	17 – 19 March 2026, Belgrade, Serbia
XK	SP 1.3 NAM	3 rd expert mission	13-17 April 2026 Pristina, Kosovo
BA	SP 1.3 NAM	2 nd additional expert mission	21 – 23 April 2026, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
n/a	SP 1.3 NAM	3 rd expert meeting	28 April 2026, MS Teams
n/a	SP 1.5 Regional Accounts	3 rd expert meeting (AL only)	16 March 2026, MS Teams
n/a	SP 1.6 Sector Accounts	3 rd expert meeting	31 March 2026, MS Teams
all PCs	SP 3.3 Transport Statistics	2 nd Workshop	14 – 15 April 2026, Zagreb, Croatia
XK	SP 4.3 ESSPROS	5 th expert mission	23 – 27 March 2026, Pristina, Kosovo
BA	SP 4.9 LCI	Training	28 – 30 April 2026, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
XK	SP 5.5 Environmental Accounts	1 st additional expert mission	30 March – 3 April 2026, Pristina, Kosovo
All PCs	SP 6.1 Quality	1 st Study visit	24 – 24 March 2026, Rome, Italy
AL	Peer review	Peer review	23 – 27 March 2026, Tirana, Albania

3. Horizontal Activities

The tables below list the number of participants in various horizontal activities, divided by partner country, and include the total number of participants since the start of the contract. Grant partner countries are not listed for working groups and ESTP training courses because their participation is organized and funded through their own grants. While they are invited to join activities such as workshops, study visits, and training courses organised by ICON, ICON is not responsible for arranging logistics or covering their costs. Instead, grant countries manage these arrangements and appoint their participants, with expenses covered by their respective grants.

Work carried out in January – February 2026

Work planned for March - April 2026

Working Group meetings

During January and February 2026, 10 participants from two partner countries attended WG meetings:

Partner Country	Jan – Feb 2026	Total participants
BA	4	237
XK	6	237
Total	10	474

For next period, 32 participants in WG meetings are expected:

Partner Country	Mar - Apr 2026	Total applicants
BA	12	12
XK	20	20
Total	32	32

SP Workshops

No workshops took place during January and February 2026.

Partner Country	Jan – Feb 2026	Total participants
AL	0	19
BA	0	21
XK	0	29
MK	0	11
ME	0	14
RS	0	12
TR	0	17
Total	0	123

For next period, 12 applicants are expected in 1 workshop:

Partner Country	Mar - Apr 2026	Total applicants
AL	2	2
BA	2	2
XK	2	2
MK	2	2
ME	-	-
RS	2	2
TR	2	2
Total	12	12

Training courses

During January and February 2026, 4 participants from two partner countries attended IPA 2022 course.

Partner Country	Jan – Feb 2026	Total participants
BA	2	26
XK	2	26
Total	4	52

For the next period, 3 applicants are expected for ESTP training courses under the contract:

Partner Country	Mar – Apr 2026	Total applicants
BA	1	1
XK	2	2
Total	3	3

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