



Reforms to Montenegro's statistical office

CARDS

Country

Serbia and Montenegro

Implementation period

2003-2004

Funding

€630,000

Results

Improved the statistical office
Monstat

Coordinator

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Partners

CESD-Roma

Statistical standards

Reliable statistics are vital to assessing a country's socio-economic standing. But, according to a study by the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat) which provides the European Union with statistics, prior to 2003 Montenegro's state-run office of statistics (Monstat) – which works closely with the federal statistical office of Serbia and Montenegro – did not meet international standards.

Monstat employs 75 people in the capital Podgorica, and a further 19 in other parts of the republic. Its assistant director Radomer Djurović admits his organisation found getting reliable statistics difficult.

Reliable data is needed about the actual situation in the country to formulate economic and social policy. It provides information about what goes on in society and formulates micro- and macroeconomic practices.

To help improve the situation, a federal task force was set up, with members from Eurostat and officials in both Serbia and Montenegro, to work on a Master Plan for reform.

The plan includes new legislation on statistics, a fully revamped organisational structure – due for launch early in 2004 – and investment in human resources, infrastructure and technical assistance.

Renewed vigour

In March 2003, a feasibility study got underway which marked the beginning of Monstat's major overhaul. Previously, the organisation relied too heavily on the federal office in Belgrade, but now Monstat plays the lead role in all data collection and processing for Montenegro.



Outside help was seen as not just an advantage but essential to rebuilding Monstat into a modern and reliable statistical service with competences into data collecting and processing.

Through EU support and individual technical assistance from Member States and experts from the region, there was an active and productive exchange of know how.

“It was particularly good to have near neighbours involved and to share their experiences,” notes Radomer Djurović.

Snag in the works

Even though the feasibility study has been completed and the implementation phase of the project is underway, the project has encountered some difficulties.

On data collection and methods Monstat is succeeding well. But data processing has proved more difficult, especially in new fields, such as how to factor science and technology into GDP calculations.

However, the project is addressing this problem, as well as how to assess more accurately the size of Montenegro’s grey economy, the level of private enterprise and the public finances.

What’s next?

Monstat needs to take on many more people in order to operate a fully functioning statistical agency. More funds are expected to make this a reality and to put into practice the Master Plan some time in 2004.