

At a Glance: ASTRA: a Management Information System on Statistical Training – MIS-ST

1. Why ASTRA?

Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Communities, has initiated the development of a Management Information System on Statistical Training (MIS-ST) with the objective to enhance the effectiveness of statistical trainings in the ACP countries (Africa, Caribbean and Pacific).

The main reason behind the decision to develop such a management tool was the fact that active experience in statistical development and training over years, as well as exchange with countries and evaluations, have shown that there is a redundant difficulty to identify clearly and to monitor systematically the demand for statistics related training at the level of the NSI but also at the level of the NSS.

Hence the goal of the ASTRA development is to put together the demand of statistics-related trainings by linking all actors of the NSS involved in a process that starts by the description of the NSS at the country level and ends with the demand of training at the level of each department of each organisations involved in the NSS.

Each training requested by a department must be linked to objectives to reach at the level of the NSS.

A first version of the management toolbox (MIS-ST, Access database) was developed containing three tools:

- The assessment reports that are information and decision making tools for the NSIs, other statistical producers in NSS, regional organisations, donors and statistical training centres.
- The Access database (ASTRA), basically considered as an input tool, generating the assessment reports and feeding the decision making process.
- The handbook describes the MIS-ST system and provides instruction for the decision making process and for all the successive steps of the operation.

The purpose of this second study is to improve the first version of ASTRA and to test this new version in four African countries which are important stakeholders of the project.

At the end of the project a new version of ASTRA will be released taking into account the comments of all stakeholders (African countries visited, Eurostat, regional organisations...).

2. Who benefits from ASTRA?

- ASTRA is a tool that facilitates and organises systematically the decision making process linked to the identification of statistics related training needs within the NSS. It provides a sound basis of information that covers the various dimensions of the demand of training in statistics. The main users here are institutional data producers of the NSS, mainly the NSI. The primary reference unit is the statistical production unit. The NSI plays a central role in the system.
- ASTRA is a tool that informs Statistical Training Centres - training providers - on the demand for training of their major clients (data producers of official statistics). It allows them to improve their response to the demand and to plan their training capacities over time (long-term, basic, short term, on-the job, and/or specific trainings).
- ASTRA is a tool that informs regional organisations on the training demands of the NSS in their covered region.
- ASTRA is a tool that informs donors on the training demands of the NSS of a country.

3. What is ASTRA?

The new version of ASTRA is a toolbox which contains three tools:

- The database, basically considered as an input tool, generates the reports and tables and feeds the decision making process.
- The reports and tables are information and decision making tools for the NSIs, and the other statistical producers in NSS, regional organizations, donors and statistical training centers.
- The handbook describes the MIS-ST system and provides instruction for the decision making process and for all the successive steps of the operation.

4. The underlying principles of ASTRA

ASTRA is developed *objectives orientated – with a top-down flow of information*.

Reports and tables are generated by the database system which leads through the different steps of the decision making processes starting from the description of the

NSS and finishing by the description of the training needs of each department of all organisations involved in the NSS of a country.

The training needs must be linked to objectives set up at the level of the NSS.

The system is *motivation led* – this means that the objectives set up at the level of the NSS (survey, census, etc.) is the key reference to which the training demand is linked.

5. Workflow of ASTRA

