

## **Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics (AITRS)**

### **Strategy Development Project**

#### TORs for preparing the strategy

AITRS was established in Baghdad in 1976 according to an agreement with the Government of Iraq based on the Law No. 59 for 1976. AITRS efforts in training and research are manifested in the many activities in which a large number of Arab statisticians have participated. These activities included high diploma program, short- and mid-term training workshops, discussion seminars and experts exchange between the Arab countries. In addition, AITRS has prepared a number of studies in the area of statistics and information technology and issued a scientific journal. The membership of the Arab Statistical Offices (ASOs) has expanded over the years to include most of the Arab countries on which AITRS depends to finance its activities, mainly through the contributions of the member countries in addition to other external revenues.

The more than 35-year AITRS march obviously requires the aspiration for a strategic planning as a must for ensuring survival. Moreover, the increasing coordination among the regional activities on statistics and with the Arab, regional and international organizations has created an ambition to make AITRS a regional center or entity with distinguished status at the global level.

In its ordinary session no. 33, AITRS board of trustees decided to develop a strategy to upgrade its activities and achieve its mission of enhancing the capabilities of ASOs, improving the quality of statistics and promoting the competency of manpower working in the ASOs through the implementation of a comprehensive, modern and quality research and training program related to the official statistical work.

After consulting with its board and member countries, AITRS aims at developing a five-year strategy that is capable of identifying a clear future objectives for the services that AITRS provides for the sakes of the ASOs, as a contribution from AITRS to the implementation of their national statistical strategies with focus on the SOs of the least developed Arab countries and on ways of enhancing its administrative and regulatory

mechanisms that will eventually support its regional and international status.

It is worth mentioning that the basic tasks of AITRS, according to its official documents, are all linked to statistics and related areas such as training, research and studies, consultations and related activities.

However the bulk of AITRS annual activities program falls within the area of training on the expense of research and consultation. It is expected that the coming strategy will be an opportunity to achieve a balance between AITRS tasks.

#### **Item One: General Objectives of the Project**

AITRS' strategy project aims at enhancing its role in upgrading the official statistics in the Arab world and its performance to obtain an advanced status in the area of statistical training and be a center for an advanced scientific research consistent with the international standards and a promoter for coordination and exchange of information and expertise among the ASOs. The general objective of the project can be broken down into the following sub-objectives:

1. Promoting AITRS performance to become a reference professional organization in the area of developing the human resources working in statistics;
2. Promoting AITRS performance to become a pioneer in scientific research for developing methodologies for the statistical work at the national level;
3. Urging and supporting the Arab countries to continuously cope with the topics and technological advances that are taking place in the field of statistics;
4. Enhancing the corporation, experience exchange and good practices among the Arab countries in statistics;
5. Strengthening AITRS status within the related regional and international organizations;
6. Developing AITRS mechanisms and tools of work and promoting the technical and administrative capabilities of its human resources.

#### **Item Two: Major Elements for Preparing the Strategy**

Taking into consideration what has been mentioned earlier and common methodology of work, the project has to focus on the following elements:

1. Evaluation of current AITRS organizational structure and performance in order to identify strengths and weaknesses and institutionalize the positive sides and avoid the negative ones. Having said that, AITRS implemented programs and their return should be examined and evaluated and ways and mechanisms used in training should be also evaluated. The pattern of governance adopted by AITRS (human resources, information technology, financial resources.....) needs to be evaluated too. To do so, training and consulting needs and views of AITRS' beneficiaries have to be surveyed and the similar experiences of others should be looked at too.
2. Revision of AITRS' visions and tasks and development of future vision based on the general directions of international statistics and needs of the Arab statistical systems.
3. Review of similar experiences and good practices in the area of regional and international training that can be useful in preparing AITRS strategy.
4. Development of an integrated strategy for AITRS.
5. Preparation of five-year plan that includes clear and affordable activities in the various areas of technical and administrative of AITRS activities with clear implementation mechanisms.

**Attachment:** Annex has useful information on the components of AITRS' strategy project and technical interests.

**Item Three: Expected Outcomes of the Project**

1. Detailed memo on the components of the strategy project and methodology used in preparing it.
2. Evaluation report of AITRS work based on consultation with its staff and with sample of its beneficiaries, trainers and partners.

Under this section, there should be an examination and evaluation of the implemented programs and their return; an evaluation of the curricula and mechanisms used in training; and an evaluation of pattern of governance adopted by AITRS (the human resources, financial resources.....). The report should identify the strengths and weaknesses in AITRS work and recommendations to overcome them, by highlighting the good practices in training at the regional and international level to benefit from them in preparing the strategy. The report should also revise AITRS vision and tasks and examine them taking into account the

results of evaluation, international trends in statistics and the challenges that the ASOs are currently facing as they are trying to improve their work.

**3.** The strategy document and five year action plan – this project element is consisted of:

- A.** Writing up a strategy for developing AITRS activities including dimensions related to the technical activities of AITRS on one hand and topics related to the organization of AITRS and its management's mechanisms on the other. It is expected that the strategy will be built on the evaluation results and recommendations and consultation with active actors in AITRS work taking into consideration the international trends as well as the priorities of the Arab countries and challenges they are facing as they are trying to improve their statistical work. The strategy should have a logical or reference framework that links the general objective, sub-objectives, expected outcomes and activities with a column showing the treats to the project and another showing suggestions to overcome them. This framework will be a tool to monitor the implementation of the strategy.
- B.** Preparation of a five-year action plan, suggested activities and implementation mechanisms. To execute the strategy components, an annual program should be developed and based on detailed activities with affordable cost for the various areas of AITRS technical and administrative activities. The following considerations should be taken into account in this regard:
- Preparation of a detailed work plan with a clear time frame and specified annual programs;
  - Suggestion of actions, activities and programs that can convert adopted strategies to reality in terms of a programmed and affordable framework.
  - Comprehensive presentation of the statistical priorities in various areas of AITRS technical works listed under its tasks as well as mechanisms of work and support activities including necessary activities to upgrade AITRS human and financial capabilities.
  - Suggestion of an estimated budget for the five-year plan.

- Development of suggestions for coordination with international and regional organizations to implement it.

It is worth mentioning that Annex includes the most important details that need to be used to address the project components.

#### **Item Four: Stages of Project Preparation**

The project duration should not exceed 180 days broken down into the following stages:  
Stage One: Twenty days starting with signing a contract with an expertise firm. These days will be allocated to prepare a detailed memo as indicated in article (1) of item three. The memo will be presented and discussed at the 37<sup>th</sup> ordinary session of AITRS board of trustees scheduled for 13-14/11/2012.

- Stage Two: Eighty days starting with its date of announcement during which the second report indicated in article (2) of item three is done. The report of this stage will be presented to a monitoring committee before being discussed with the expertise firm in a meeting held at AITRS.
- Stage Three: Seventy days starting from its date of announcement will be devoted to prepare a strategy and five-year implantation program to upgrade AITRS. The results of this stage will be presented at an extraordinary session of AITRS board of trustees and experts for discussion and comments before endorsement. The expertise firm will be given 10 days to amend the report based on the comments received from the board of trustees before printing the final version of the strategy.

#### **Qualifications of the Required Expertise**

Given the nature of the required work and duration given to accomplish it, the expertise will be selected based on the following qualifications:

- The expertise team is consisted of two experts in statistics and economics;
- The experts should have an experience in statistical training and strategic planning for at least five years;
- The experts should have contributions to similar work.

#### **Available documents that are at the disposal of the project team:**

- Institute regulations;
- Reports submitted to AITRS' Board of Trustees in the last five years;
- AITRS previous strategic plan;

- Training programs for the past five years;
- Research conducted since the establishment of AITRS;
- Suggestions received from the NSOs of the member Arab states.

In addition, the project team is advised to utilize the reports of the relevant U.N departments as a reference framework to monitor AITRS' interests as well as the National Statistical Strategies of the Arab Countries.

**The bid file:**

The bid must contain the following documents:

- (1) Documented evidence of the required experience in Arabic or English (competencies, CVs of experts, previous experiences, and testimonies of former clients). Summary about the plan of action for the implementation of the project should not exceed 5 pages).
- (2) Financial cost. Note that payment of cost will be paid according to the following installments:
  - 10% of the cost at the end of the first stage as indicated in paragraph 1 of item three.
  - 40% of the cost at the end of the second stage as indicated in paragraph 2 of item three.
  - 50% of the cost at the end of the third stage as indicated in paragraph 3 item three.

Notice: the contractor bears the cost of travel, accommodation, movement of supplies and experts' fees throughout the work.

## Annex

This annex specifies the dimensions that the strategy is expected to address. These dimensions are:

- Statistical training and qualifying.
- Statistical research, studies, consultations and related activities.
- Relations with external bodies.
- AITRS administration and its management mechanisms.

These dimensions will be addressed in every stage of the strategy development stages: evaluation, identification of strategic directions and control of the practical plan.

### **(1) Statistical Training and Qualifying**

This dimension is the pivotal topic in AITRS activities given its importance in building the capacity of persons working in statistics as well as in the ASOs. The work plans in the area of training include several mechanisms of which:

- Long-term training.
- Short-term training.
- Individual training.
- Observation tours.
- Arab fellowship in statistics

It is expected that the return of various training mechanisms is compared showing the advantages and limitations of each one, provided that the strategy assigned a higher weight for the most effective and useful mechanisms.

This dimension will address the following basic and practical topics and issues related to training of which:

- Statistical topics listed under training courses.
- Evaluation of training needs of the ASOs, taking into account the national strategies, work plans and most recent recommendations.
- The annual programming of training courses based on needs.
- Training methods and means adopted and uses of modern technology in this area.
- Preparations and design of training courses.

- Considering the fact that some Arab countries are more advanced than others in statistics and assessing the possibility of organizing training courses for a specific group of countries based on their needs, keeping in mind a balanced benefit of AITRS training courses by the Arab countries.
- Promoting the mechanisms of training of trainers in order to sustain the training process at the national level and strengthen the trained human resources working at the ASOs.
- Suggestion of new training mechanisms proven to be effective in other regional programs such as training representatives of Arab countries (or group of countries) on a certain thematic area and gradual levels provided that they will apply the acquired expertise in their own countries. This mechanism will create Arab experts in several statistical areas who can be utilized to generalize knowledge in a certain area in all Arab countries.
- Quality of training and qualifications of trainers.
- Developing of an e-learning program along with surveying the readiness of the ASOs to gradually introduce this program into their work.
- Relation with trainees and evaluation of the extent to which they have benefited from training.

## **(2) Other Technical Activities**

This dimension includes activities of in-depth scientific and empirical content particularly in the area of research, studies and consultation provision specific to various statistical areas. These activities basically are:

- Technical research and studies in statistics. It is expected that this aspect of AITRS work will receive the required attention.
- Technical consultation in statistics.
- Other related technical activities such as:  
Organizing regional seminars and workshops. It is anticipated that this type of AITRS works are evaluated in terms of work loads or in terms of their return and effectiveness in developing statistical work at AITRS and ASOs.

The suggested strategic directions will be important in identifying areas for research and consultations and in allocating resources necessary to equip AITRS with the scientific



capabilities to carry on these works and to contribute to building the analytical and research capabilities working at the national statistical offices.

### **(3) Leverage between Mechanisms of Work at AITRS**

In order to achieve AITRS objectives aiming at enhancing the capacity of ASOs and working within a consistent and integrated framework, it is suggested to build thematic bridges between AITRS mechanisms of work such as training, statistical consultations and workshops.

### **(4) Statistical Areas**

AITRS scope of work includes various areas and aspects of statistics with respect to training activities or other activities such as research, consultations, seminars and others. These areas are distributed over four major dimensions:

- Statistical Work frame
  - Legal frame of statistical work.
  - Coordination of statistical systems and consultation with users of statistical information.
  - Statistical software.
  - Statistical principles and good practices and quality standards in statistics.
  - International cooperation in statistics.
- Statistical Product
  - Production and techniques of statistical data.
  - Analysis of statistical statues and its techniques.
  - Sectoral statistical fields:
    - Demographic and social statistics: population, employment, wages, education, health ....
    - Economic statistics: agriculture and fishing, manufacturing, trade, financial services.
    - Horizontal areas: national accounts, environment, economic cycles ....
  - Phrasing Of statistical data
    - Dissemination of statistical information and its mechanisms.

- Statistical capabilities and management of statistical work
  - Organization and run of statistical offices.
  - Mechanisms for strengthening the relationship between producers and users of statistics.
  - Human resources management.
  - Frames for total quality at statistical offices.
  - Management of statistical projects.
  - Communication and relationship with media works.
  - Financing of statistical activity and financial management.
  - Measurement of capacity development at the statistical offices.

#### **(5) Creation Of Interactive Information System**

The development of a suggestion regarding the creation of an interactive information system in order to enhance communication among persons working in statistics, exchange of good practices in training, utilization of training materials and documents and share of database on regional and international trainers in statistics.

#### **(6) Relationship With External Bodies**

The continued relationship of cooperation with the ASOs and similar training and research organizations are a basic element in developing AITRS work, enhancing its capabilities and catching up with various updates related to its work. It is anticipated that the evaluation of AITRS work in comparison with similar organizations will help direct suggestion towards the establishment of close relations with specialized training entities. In addition to cooperation relationships, this dimension may include:

- Dissemination and publication works of AITRS documents, documentation works and accusation of statistical bulletins especially manuals and methodological documents in statistics.
- External communication works with various parties interested in AITRS issues through its website or other means of communication.
- Organizational joint training courses and workshops with regional organizations.

- Utilizing experts working at the international and regional organizations in the area of statistical training and consultations.
- Coordination with all active regional entities working in statistics.
- Creating search mechanisms for additional funding of AITRS.