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**PROGRESS REPORT ON THE PROJECT TO ESTABLISH A REGIONAL STATISTICAL
FRAMEWORK FOR DIRECTORIES OF BUSINESSES AND ESTABLISHMENTS***

* This report was prepared by Chile, the country that is coordinating component 1 of the project.

SUMMARY

The Regional Statistical Framework for Directories of Businesses and Establishments project conducted by the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO) in Chile and financed by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) benefits the following 11 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean: Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay. Out of a total US\$ 1,647,000 in funding, the IDB is contributing US\$ 1 million. The remaining resources will be provided in kind by the beneficiary institutions.

The purpose of the operation is to define a regionally agreed strategy for the preparation, implementation and management of directories of businesses and establishments, and to complement it with a regional action plan for execution of the strategy over a 36-month timeline, broken down into four components.

Component 1	Diagnostic review of directories of businesses and establishments in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. Deliverables
Component 2	Regional strategy and action plan for preparing, implementing and managing directories
Component 3	Regional technical recommendations for directories of businesses and establishments
Component 4	Training and technical assistance plan for directories of businesses and establishments

Project execution and technical management will be the responsibility of an advisory committee comprising one representative of each beneficiary country, to make strategic decisions concerning the project. Each country shall also appoint a technical manager.

PROGRESS TO DATE

The project was launched with a workshop conducted on 11 and 12 May 2010 in Santiago, where participating countries confirmed their commitment to play an active, hands-on leadership role during project execution and were apprised of the technical content of each component of the project. The official governance scheme for the project was agreed, and the operating regulations were approved; these set out the general terms of reference for engaging the international consultant who will be responsible for the consultancy portion of component 1.

The subgroups and lead countries were agreed as follows:

Component	Component lead	Subgroup
1	Chile	Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay and Peru
2	Peru	Dominican Republic, Chile, Mexico and Paraguay
3	Colombia	Brazil, El Salvador, Honduras, Peru and Uruguay
4	Mexico	Colombia, El Salvador, Honduras and Peru

Component 1, led by Chile, involves designing and implementing a set of instruments and methodologies (toolkit) for conducting diagnostic reviews of directories of businesses and establishments and related economics statistics in the participating countries. To this end, it was divided into four subcomponents to be executed over a period of 12 months starting 10 May 2010.

Subcomponent 1	Establish the advisory committee, define work methods and approve the work programme
Subcomponent 2	Develop a self-assessment tool for identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis)
Subcomponent 3	Conduct country self-assessments
Subcomponent 4	Draft a report on the findings of the self-assessments

The tasks under subcomponent 1 were performed at the workshop.

Subcomponent 2, now in execution, entails (a) preparing and approving the terms of reference by the members of the appropriate subgroup and the advisory committee; (b) recruiting, selecting and engaging the international consultant;¹ (c) monitoring and following up on design of the self-assessment tool by the international consultant; (d) drafting and submitting the terms of reference for engagement of national consultants;² (e) conducting the second workshop on the regional statistical framework for directories of businesses and establishments on 29 and 30 November 2010, in Aguascalientes, Mexico; and (f) delivering the final report on the tool that will be used. The tool (a 300-page document) was thoroughly reviewed during the second workshop. The countries were reminded of the importance of their commitment to the IDB Regional Public Goods Program and the toolkit assessment, and they were urged to report any changes in the advisory committee or technical managers. Lastly, it was agreed that the workshop for completing execution of component 1 would be held on 26 and 27 April 2011 in Lima.

Using the toolkit, diagnostic reviews of directories of businesses and establishments will be conducted in three stages:

(a) Stage 1: Gathering useful information

This stage is divided into two parts:

(i) Information provided by directory managers and agents

This information comprises a description of how the directory will be built and updated; the internal and external factors that impact it, such as sources of updates and owners (providers); the information technology platform, staffing, budget, legal groundwork, treatment and measurement of directory quality; documentation and staff training; and relationships with providers and users, such as statisticians.

¹ Hugues Picard, a French consultant, was chosen over two other options because of his extensive experience in technical assistance on directories for national statistical institutes in Latin America and in developed countries, in consulting services and technical assistance for statistical capacity-building at national statistical institutes in Latin America and the European Union and in developing and managing economics statistics projects for national statistical institutes in Latin America and the European Union; his post-graduate studies in line with the requirements of the consultancy; and because he speaks fluent Spanish.

² Each participating country shall engage a national consultant.

(ii) *Information from sources outside the directory*

This section contains two types of information. The first is information on sources (providers), on the information technology platform and on budget, staffing, and legal groundwork, as well as expected changes to any of these elements.

The second section refers to information provided by directory users on their needs, usage, the data that the directory should contain and their opinion on the quality of the directory in general and of its components.

(b) Stage 2: Situation analysis

The information gathered during the first stage will allow for a dual analysis of the situation: a static analysis at a given moment in time, pinpointing strengths and weaknesses and identifying the elements most in need of change or development (particularly user needs), and a dynamic SWOT analysis to describe the internal and external factors that might be facilitating or hampering improvement or, at least, maintenance of the status quo.

(c) Stage 3: Recommendations

Recommendations shall be based on the work performed during the second stage and shall refer to the goals; however, they should take account of the factors that hamper or limit the possibilities for development.

Subcomponent 3 is currently in execution. Execution of subcomponent 4 is to begin on 15 March 2011.