

Distr.  
GENERAL

CES/AC.71/2005/10 (Summary)  
31 January 2005

Original: ENGLISH

**UNITED NATIONS STATISTICAL COMMISSION and  
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE (ECE)  
CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS**

**EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
STATISTICAL OFFICE OF THE  
EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES (EUROSTAT)**

**ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC  
COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT (OECD)  
STATISTICS DIRECTORATE**

**Joint ECE/Eurostat/OECD Meeting on the Management of Statistical Information Systems (MSIS)**  
(Bratislava, Slovakia, 18-20 April 2005)

Topic (ii): Development strategies for statistical information systems

**BETTER SYSTEMS? THAT MEANS IMPROVEMENT OF THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS!**

### **Invited Paper**

Submitted by Statistics Netherlands<sup>1</sup>

### **Summary**

1. For two years now Statistics Netherlands has been involved in implementing a program to improve the processes of the IT division, especially the process of developing and delivering software applications. Just like in other institutes it was found that the informal ways of systems development that accompanied the advent of the desktop computer were no longer adequate for the large systems being built.
2. The improvement program consisted of the implementation of the following methods for work:
  - RUP for application production
  - ISEB/TMAP for testing
  - PRINCE2 for project management
3. The first program is the implementation of a better application development process. RUP, which stands for Rational Unified Process, is a method that has a very formal way of defining the process that leads to a new IT application. The method relies heavily on controlled iteration. The second programme is the implementation of formal test methods using ISEB (Information Systems Examination Board) and TMAP (Test Management Approach) /TPI (Test process Improvement). The third program is the implementation of PRINCE2 for project management. PRINCE stands for Projects IN a Controlled Environment and is a fairly common method in this area. The aim of the programme is to improve the way projects are being managed and to create a standardized process.

---

<sup>1</sup> Prepared by M.H.J. Vučan (mvcn@cbs.nl).

4. Initially the same methods of implementation had been chosen for the three projects. The scope was the IT division. They were all implemented by training and coaching of involved professionals and tools were supplied where possible. Although initially not perceived as such, it became clear after the first year that these three projects also meant that the IT organization had to change from a staffing organization into a project organization and as such the whole organization had to change. Also there was resistance from the rest of the organization against the changes. After a year a reassessment of the projects indicated that it would be much better to put them on the institute level instead.

5. For RUP and ISEB/TMAP it meant that also professionals from other divisions were included in the training and coaching programs. The implementation of the Prince2 project not only had its scope enlarged to the whole organization, but also the implementation strategy was changed. Had it been a project for improvement of project managers, it now changed into a top down implementation. Since the Prince2 method is very specific about the various roles that are to be fulfilled by management participating in project boards, it was decided that all managers in the organization should undergo training with respect to these aspects of Prince2, beginning with the executive board, working our way down to directors, department managers etc. All project managers were trained extensively in the use of the method. Aside from that, the project managers all underwent capability training like stakeholder management, negotiation skills etcetera.

6. It turned out that training professionals in the use of methods is relatively straightforward. As long as there is coaching for a longer period of time, the implementation will progress at a reasonable pace. However, changing an organization is by no means an easy task. Like in other government bodies, the extensive use of business cases, management by exception, and rigid portfolio management were not that common. The production paradox proved to be another factor; especially the fact that the learning of these new methods takes time was not generally appreciated in an environment where time and human capacity are scarce. In spite of these difficulties we see an overall improvement in the way IT projects are being carried out and in the results they produce.

7. The implementation of RUP had an interesting side-effect. In the RUP method it is assumed that quite a number of different activities are performed by different individuals or individuals in different roles. Because of these explicit roles it became apparent that not only there is a complicating factor on the side of human resource management, but also the system of job descriptions of the different professionals had to change in the organization.

8. At the moment, phase 1 is nearly completed, the basic structures are there and the required change of the organization is underway. The projects are being moved into the normal management structure.

-----