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Topic (iii): Resource management in statistical offices and the role of the IT departments

**IT APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT AND TEAM ORGANISATION AT STATISTICS
FINLAND**

Submitted by Statistics Finland ¹

INVITED PAPER

SUMMARY

1. Teamwork was one of the keywords in the 1990s. At Statistics Finland we consider a team to be a small group of persons with complementary skills working together towards a mutual goal. A team is more than the sum of its members. In order to get the best out of teamwork you also have to make changes to the organisation. The traditional hierarchical organisation has to be replaced with a flat, self-directed organisation. The change may concern the whole organisation or it can be implemented at unit level.

2. At Statistics Finland, one of the first units that changed its organisation towards teams was the Information Technology Services unit. The first step was taken in 1996 when we organised workstation support to work as a team. The next step was when we considered different forms and solutions to

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improve application work. We began to plan ways in which teamwork and team organisation could be carried out in application development as well. At the beginning of 1999 the whole application work was transferred under the team organisation.

3. When we started to develop towards team organisation, one goal was to increase the knowledge capital, i.e. the exploitation of the hidden know-how of an organisation. It is said that only 5-15 per cent of the knowledge of the organisation can be used. This is the same with human brains when only a few per cent of the capacity is in use.

4. At the beginning the basic goals of the teamwork were:

- ◆ application development goes on at least as well as before;
- ◆ substitutes are more available than before;
- ◆ division of work is more flexible;
- ◆ to develop co-operation and interactive working methods;
- ◆ to increase job satisfaction.

5. The Information Technology Services unit has always emphasised cooperation with statistical units. Nowadays, this has become increasingly important. We consider teamwork as a method where we can dispel the differences between the Information Technology Services and the statistical units. The first experiences show that the number of collaborative projects has increased. One potential way of developing teams would be to have persons from the IT unit and from the statistical unit working in the same team.