Report by the Director-General on the execution of the programme (34 C/5) (01 January - 31 December 2008)

UNESCO Institute for Statistics

Part II – Programmes and programme related services
II.A – Programmes

UNESCO INSTITUTE FOR STATISTICS (UIS)

Regular budget: Activities (rounded to $ thousand)	
Planned: $9,020	Actual: $4,510

Para. 06009 - MLA 1: Improvement of the UNESCO cross-national statistical database

34 C/5 Expected Results	Achievements	Challenges/ Lessons Learnt	Cost- Effectiveness	Sustainability (Indicators or Measures)	Recommendations by the Executive Board
Data quality and timeliness systematically reported on and improved.	• The UIS is establishing a new framework to measure improvements in the quality of its data particularly in the field of education. A practical strategy has been developed and specific indicators are currently being examined. • The relevance of education data has been improved by redesigning Questionnaire A, to include data on class size and secondary graduates. Additional design work has been undertaken to extend the data collection on teachers and to simplify the approach to collecting finance data. • Improved completeness of education data, especially for finance data in sub-Saharan Africa through intensive work in selected Member States and partnerships with regional and international organizations. • The use of national data plans as a key element of the UIS data quality strategy has been started with an evaluation of current tools, the preparation of a training manual and initial training conducted in Asia. Most Latin American and Caribbean countries have completed data plans. • Timeliness of education data improved, more than 70 countries are reporting on key indicators ahead of the current reference year. Timetable for literacy and attainment data submissions shortened. Responses to R&D survey improved in both numbers of responses	• Effectively measuring and reporting on quality requires commitment from all sections and a collaborative working environment in order to be successful. • Stakeholders need to be involved, but sometimes represent narrow constituencies. Regional variation in policy issues requires more flexible technical solutions. • There are trade-offs between improving data quality and data completeness – i.e. higher standards can result in fewer data. The growing demand for data on fragile states poses a major challenge. • Maintaining strong links to national statisticians improves responsiveness – but need to ensure proper technical support to countries. The revised electronic questionnaire should help. Other approaches towards improving	Cost-effectiveness is an aspect of data quality to be monitored. Improving data quality is a resource intensive exercise. Greater reliance on UIS staff at regional and cluster level will improve cost-effectiveness. Consistency in questionnaire design reduces annual costs and improves efficiency.	The outcomes from this project will provide an important pillar for sustaining and further improving a highly effective statistical work programme. The UIS is building closer links to countries and improving feedback to them in order to further sustain improvements in data quality.	

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	and speed of response.	response rates are being addressed in a scoping study. • Adjusting UIS routines to allow countries to report and validate indicators early has been successful. • In the Asia and Pacific region, some countries do not have institutionalized systems for reporting data to the UIS which can lead to considerable delays or problems with data quality. However, intensive follow-up with countries does lead to concrete results, as in the case of Afghanistan and Timor Leste, which are submitting data to the Institute for the first time. • Countries need encouragement and assistance in integrating UIS data collections within their national monitoring and reporting systems. • Some countries still need further assistance in understanding international standards and classifications to improve data collection and quality.			
	• The UIS regional teams, in particular, are working closely with Member States to identify and resolve differences between national and international educational data. These discrepancies are most often due to differences between national and international population estimates (the latter are produced by the UN Population Division – UNPD – which is the official data source for UN organizations, including the UIS).	• The UIS must find ways to encourage countries and the UNPD to resolve differences between national and international population estimates. This is a major problem for virtually all international organizations producing population-based indicators.			
Literacy historical data series reviewed and data quality improved.	• Historical literacy data (1990 to present) reviewed in April 2008 and integrated in UIS database. The aim was to provide policymakers at national and international levels with consistent data set to better analyse trends since 1990.				

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Quality of literacy data improved as a result of the integration of assessment and dichotomous literacy data.	• The 2007 UIS literacy survey included specific items requesting assessment data. However, response rates were very low.	• Further evaluation required to judge whether countries don't have the data or are not able to submit them.		By giving greater visibility to assessment data through vehicles such as the GMR, it is possible to stimulate greater interest in initiatives such as LAMP.	
2006 research and development data released.	• Preliminary data released in 2007 and updated in June 2008.				
New research and development survey launched in 2008.	• Launched in June 2008. The R&D survey is now established as a regular UIS survey and results in good response levels.				
Data from 2006 press and broadcast surveys released in 2007.	• Data released at the end of 2007. The overall response rate for the press survey was 51% with considerable disparities between regions: North America 100%; Europe 68%; sub-Saharan Africa 54%; Asia 50%; Arab States 47%; Latin America and the Caribbean 45%; Pacific States 35%. • The response rate for the broadcast survey was 55% with variation among regions: Europe 82%; Latin America and the Caribbean 56%; North America 50%; sub-Saharan Africa 41%; Asia and the Pacific 35%.		Introduction of more standardised procedures for data processing should improve processing effectiveness.	Data on press and broadcast are available from a majority of countries. A more informed view of resources requirements for the surveys will allow sustainability.	
New press and broadcast surveys launched in 2008.	• Press and broadcast surveys postponed until complete review of 2007 surveys.	• See response rates described above.	Review of demand and availability of data will make future surveys more cost efficient.	Surveys must clearly respond to the availability of data and demand for its use to improve sustainability.	

Para. 06010 - MLA 2: Development of new methodologies, standards and indicators

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Quality of existing data improved.	• The UIS constantly seeks to improve the framework for monitoring EFA in consultation with the GMR team and other stakeholders. In addition, methodologies are being improved in a number of areas, most notably education finance, teachers and higher education. • To improve the comparability of UIS data	• This is a long-term effort requiring close collaboration with key stakeholders. • It is vital to anticipate emerging policy issues and the specific needs of regions. • Forging an international consensus	Prioritisation is important – there are many areas where development is needed but feasibility is a key factor to cost-effectiveness.	Involvement of stakeholders ("buy-in") in the consideration, design and data collection are essential to the sustainability of new indicator methodologies.	

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	across countries, the Institute is undertaking a formal review of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 97). An advisory technical panel has been created to establish priorities and develop a proposal to improve the implementation of ISCED and to evaluate possible revisions of the classification. This proposal will be the subject of international consultations undertaken in 2010 before its submission to the UNESCO General Conference in 2011. • In collaboration with the OECD, the UIS has adapted the data quality assessment framework (DQAF) for education statistics (see section on "Technical Guidelines and Tools"). Together with BREDA and cluster offices in the region, the UIS is implementing DQAF in six pilot countries in the Southern African Development Community (SADC). A similar partnership is being prepared with the African Union. • In Latin America and the Caribbean, the UIS is helping to develop new regional indicators to improve the monitoring of: early childhood care and education; special education needs; and 'living together'.	in this area may prove challenging due to the wide range and complexity of the classification issues in question. • In light of this project's success, discussions are underway to expand it through Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).			
Countries implementing the Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme (LAMP) provided, for the first time, with an accurate assessment of the literacy skills levels of their populations.	• Field tests were completed in the five pilot countries (El Salvador, Mongolia, Morocco, Niger and the Palestinian Autonomous Territories). These data sets have been cleaned and analysed. This has led to revision and adaptation of LAMP instruments and methodologies in order to improve the quality and comparability of data. The results of the pilot studies and the adjustments in LAMP methodologies will be presented in a report to be released in 2009. • Another four countries (Jordan, Vietnam, Paraguay, Namibia) have started to implement LAMP. • As part of the new UIS strategy for LAMP expansion, the Institute is forming technical advisory groups to help countries joining the programme. An advisory group has already been established for Latin American and	• Complexity of measuring literacy skills across languages and cultures has led to major improvements in the overall approach and instruments of LAMP.	Each national LAMP plan is designed to balance the implementation costs with the usability of results. National ownership is being promoted to maximise data use for policymaking.	Technical Advisory Groups (platforms for delivering technical support) are being established as part of the UIS strategy for global implementation. This was part of the recommendations of the independent evaluation of LAMP carried out in 2008.	

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	Caribbean countries and is close to completion in Asia and the Pacific. • The UIS is also developing a databank of LAMP assessment items to facilitate the ongoing improvement of instruments.				
Measurement of non-formal education and its contribution to Education for All (EFA) improved.	• This is being addressed through the review process of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED – see section on "Improving Data Quality"). An initial proposal will be distributed and addressed in regional consultations in 2009.				
Quality of existing research and development data improved, and number of countries providing data to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics increased.	• Response rates for R&D survey rose from 58% to 65% (for last two surveys conducted in 2004 and 2006). Response rates for African countries rose from 35% to 61%. Work has begun to refine the international standard for R&D statistics.	• The UIS will increase efforts to contact countries at the national and regional levels in order to reinforce response rates. Specific groups of countries, such as the Arab States in Asia (which had response rate of 58%) will be targeted.	To improve effectiveness, the UIS will target those countries which have research facilities but don't respond to the survey.	The survey is used by major international institutions (e.g. World Bank) and has attained global recognition.	
Data on the mobility of doctoral holders, highly skilled people and their research increased.	• Results of Eurostat survey, which included data on non-OECD researchers working in the European Union, were released in December 2008.	• UIS will work with the European Union on statistics concerning doctorate holders from developing countries in 2009.	Joint work with OECD and EU is leveraging access to shared database.		
Availability of international data on innovation broadened.	• UIS strategy for innovation statistics agreed with key partners, such as OECD and Eurostat.	• This initiative will require mobilisation of extra funding.			
Assistance to developing countries, especially in Africa, encouraged.	• Improving the availability, quality and use of data from and within the region is a major priority for the UIS. This is reflected by the Institute's diverse training activities, technical assistance projects and close contacts with national and regional statistical organizations. Notable examples include the successful completion of projects to implement and maintain education management information systems (EMIS), which was funded by the European Union (see section on "Collaboration with development agencies…."). • The Institute is also working with the World Bank to improve the quality of education finance data in selected francophone African countries. This project is designed to enable			The UIS is shifting the focus of its technical assistance projects to ensure that national capacities are sustainably enhanced. This will ensure minimizing the risk of countries becoming dependent on external assistance to resolve their internal data collection systems and procedures.	

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	national authorities to regularly produce and use finance data for education planning. • Overall, African countries working with the UIS generally publish education statistical yearbooks by 12 months of the start of the school year in question. • In the field of science and technology, the UIS organized a regional training workshop in Botswana (with UNESCO SC/PSD, African Union and NEPAD) and in Cambodia (with UNESCO SC/PSD). • The UIS has also initiated a new study on higher education statistics in Western and Central Africa. This study will mobilize expertise within the region to identify gaps in the data as well as policy options.			The African Union plans to organize a follow-up workshop to be held in Kenya.	
Coherent framework for specification and collection of cultural statistics established.	• The draft framework has been formally disseminated to Member States and is currently the subject of a series of regional consultations. For further details, please see the report submitted to the Executive Board with the Culture Sector.	• To ensure that the framework reflects the key statistical issues and priorities of diverse Member States, the UIS has organized a series of regional consultations with experts in Africa, Arab States, Asia and Latin America.	Significant resources are required for this consultation process. Nevertheless, it is important to obtain direct input from Member States.	Adoption of the new framework will help to improve collection of internationally comparable statistics on culture as well as UNESCO's visibility in this field.	
New indicators and methodologies for priority sectors and themes of UNESCO cultural policy developed.	• The UIS completed two surveys – on cinema and libraries – in 2008. The data have been analysed and released. Both surveys were 'revised' versions of UNESCO surveys that had not been undertaken since the early 1990s. • The results for the library survey were presented to the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA). Results from the cinema survey will be presented in the next World Report on Culture.	• Cinema survey: regional response rate for Europe (64%), Asia (30%), Americas (21%), Africa (17%) Oceania (12%). • Libraries survey: piloted in Latin America and the Caribbean with a response rate of 63%.	Significant support and finance from partners (e.g. IFLA and Observ. de la Culture et des Communications de Quebec) helped in survey design, follow-up and evaluation. This underlines the need to work with experts and professional bodies when conducting sectoral surveys.		

Para. 06011 - MLA 3: Statistical capacity-building

34 C/5 Expected Results	Achievements	Challenges/ Lessons Learnt	Cost- Effectiveness	Sustainability (Indicators or Measures)	Recommendations by the Executive Board
Collaboration with development agencies, line ministries and civil society improved.	• Regional workshops on education statistics throughout 2008 have led to improved responsiveness to data queries from ministries, civil society and donors. • The Institute is reinforcing its field presence by expanding its network of statistical advisors in order to improve data quality at the national and international levels. The network will also reinforce and develop new regional partnerships with the aim of offering more sustainable capacity-building projects. • Procedures are underway to recruit six statistical advisors, who will be based in the following UNESCO cluster offices: Bamako, Doha, Nairobi, New Delhi, Windhoek and Yaoundé. • The Institute has completed a major project, funded by the European Commission, to reinforce national statistical capabilities to monitor EFA. The project began in 2003 and involved 11 countries (seven in Africa, three in Asia and one in Latin America). According to an independent evaluation, the project led to the successful implementation of a range of information management systems, procedures, methodological approaches, survey instruments and standards for data collection, analysis and use. According to the evaluation, diverse components of data quality were significantly improved in the participating countries. • The UIS continues to reinforce its relations with statistical organizations such as PARIS21 and AFRISTAT in order to reinforce the impact of its capacity-building work and to improve data quality. • Concerning the Summits of the Americas	• The main lessons include the involvement of technical teams at the national level. • Cluster and regional offices provide an ideal setting for statistical advisors to cultivate close and sustainable relations with national statistical organizations and policymakers without falling into the trap of 'dependency' on international consultants. • Improvements in the availability, precision and timeliness of data were particularly striking at the sub-national level. In some countries, there was a 50% reduction in the time required for data production at the district level. These changes also impact the quality and availability of data at the international level. The auditors compared the 2004 and 2007 editions of the Global Education Digest and found that there was 25% more data available for the 11 participating countries. For pre-primary education, data availability improved by 95%.	The UIS has shifted its approach to focus more on providing and organizing technical assistance rather than hands-on implementation.	The UIS engages a range of partners within UNESCO, other development agencies and national donors to help finance these training sessions. Some of the workshops are also financed within the framework of bilateral technical assistance agreements. Sustainability largely depends on country ownership of the project which can be facilitated by establishing national teams that are fully trained for implementation activities.	

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	Regional Education Indicators Project (PRIE), work plan for 2008-09 designed and presented to OAS. MoU prepared and signed with Mexico as the main donor. • In Asia and the Pacific, the UIS and UNICEF have agreed to a multi-year joint project on education statistics.				
Efficiency and cost-effectiveness for sector-wide programmes, and sustainability of development assistance enhanced.	• EMIS projects described above provide a good example of a road-map establishing points of dialogue between all partners involved in the education sector-wide programme.				
Monitoring and evaluation of national and international goals strengthened.	• UIS is considered a leader in the ongoing refinement and improvement of education monitoring frameworks for the MDGs and EFA. In particular, the UIS provides data and analysis to the EFA Global Monitoring report and the MDG initiative. In terms of regional monitoring: • Most countries in the Asia-Pacific region completed their national EFA mid-decade assessment reports in 2008 with technical assistance from the UIS regional team. • The UIS has reinforced collaboration with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean in order to improve MDG-monitoring in the region. • The UIS also provided data and analysis to regional EFA mid-term review for the Santiago Regional Bureaux.	• Efforts to explain UIS data preparation process as well as the reasons behind differences between international and national statistics must be pursued, as in the recent MDG regional meeting in Kampala. • There is a need to better harmonize agencies' contribution to the MDGs from UNSD. • Contextualising data at the national level is an exercise which is often beyond the scope of UIS capacities.	Monitoring and evaluation should make continued use of resources at the regional and cluster levels. Partnerships with national institutions and other EFA partners and donors will ensure that costs for monitoring are shared and reduced.	The MDA process has further strengthened monitoring and evaluation of national and international education goals within countries and regions.	
Technical guidelines and tools developed and disseminated to Member States.	• Two diagnostic tools - data quality assessment framework (DQAF) and data plans – are being implemented in a wider number of countries. • The DQAF is based on methodologies developed by the International Monetary Fund for finance statistics. The UIS adapted the framework to education statistics in a joint	• These tools are effective to identify the need for interventions. But greater efforts are required to obtain concrete results from their application (e.g., mobilisation of line ministries, donors, etc.)	Reinforced linkages to regional and cluster offices will improve cost-effectiveness of applying these tools, which should also be linked to other initiatives for greater impact.		

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	project with the OECD. The DQAF is now being introduced to diverse countries working with the UIS to reinforce their statistical capacities, with special priority given to Africa. • Data plans document each phase in the process of collecting and reporting data to the UIS. They also provide guidance on resolving common problems encountered in the field (namely harmonizing national and international data) and help to identify areas that require more intensive follow-up. The plans are also designed to help countries overcome problems associated with staff turn-over, which frequently impacts the availability, quality and timeliness of data reported to the UIS. • Data plans have already been established in countries throughout the LAC region. This project will be expanded, with special priority given to sub-Saharan Africa. • As part of the joint UIS/IIEP project on higher education, a practical guide to improve the monitoring of higher education in African countries has been finalized and will be released in 2009. • A guidebook on the adoption of household-based literacy modules in countries have been printed and distributed to countries to improve the design and implementation of these surveys. • The UIS regional team is also working closely with media associations to improve the reporting of EFA-related stories (a special handbook was prepared and distributed in English, Lao, Thai and Vietnamese.	• The joint project reflects the urgent demand for better quality data by Member States, development partners and UNESCO. • Publications should be accompanied by a strong dissemination plan and ensure that it is distributed to a wider audience.	Distribution of the electronic version is also a way of ensuring wider dissemination at reduced costs.	The sustainability of the project will require ongoing training of the national teams.	
Operational strategy for data collection put in place.	• Standardisation and consistency introduced for all respondent communications and non-questionnaire products. Terms of reference drafted for external review of all questionnaires; UIS regional network has been engaged for non-response follow-up procedures.	• Development of institute-wide standards requires broad consultation and defined decision making/approval process. Engaging regional resources competes with many other activities and advance planning and follow-up is necessary. • Methodological support can be time	Cost-effectiveness has been excellent; Timeliness has suffered from the use of existing internal resources and competing resource demands.	Sustainability depends upon continued Institutional commitment to standards and consistency.	

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		consuming and difficult to effectively establish. To some extent, it is easier to simply provide direct technical assistance. However, this kind of support is not sustainable and does not reinforce the capacities of national authorities.			
	• Release of the report, entitled *"Education Information System Diagnosis Mission Assessment - LAC".* This report identifies the strengths and weaknesses of data production cycles in 17 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.		This report will serve as a foundation for statistical capacity-building activities in the region. It is a valuable resource for UNESCO, national governments and development partners.		
Capacities of national and local officials to analyse education statistics improved.	• The UIS organizes training workshop to improve the quality and analysis of education statistics in each sub-region about every two years. For the period concerned, national statisticians and education planners from Central Asia, francophone African countries, Latin America and the Caribbean as well as East, South and West Asia were trained on ways to improve data analysis for policy-planning. In addition, more specialized workshops were organized within the framework of technical assistance projects and regional partnerships to improve data quality. An exhaustive list of these workshops is available upon request.	• Ongoing support is required for countries to publish and use their micro-data. • The UIS must continually reinforce and encourage cooperation between different data producers.		Encouraging country leadership and ownership ensures the sustainability of capacity development activities.	
	• Please see sections on improving data quality and statistical capacity building for a review of the achievements of these workshops. • This work is exemplified by a series of training sessions on the use of longitudinal data in diverse African states. As a result of these training activities, micro-longitudinal education data are now available to national authorities for policy-planning in Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Uganda. • The UIS also works with regional partners to reinforce national capacities. In Asia and the Pacific, for example, the UIS has provided national statisticians from across the region with training on MDG monitoring in cooperation	• Training sessions are more effective when the materials incorporate the local context. • Some countries require more hands-on training on the completion of UIS questionnaires and on the underlying concepts and indicators used in UIS data collections. • Need to improve training activities on methodology and use of education indictors.	Cost efficiency is improved through partnerships with national institutions, EFA partners, regional organizations and donors.	Ministries of education are increasingly taking the lead in organizing training workshops with the technical support of the UIS. This experience in Asia and the Pacific offers important lessons for improving sustainability.	

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	with other regional UN bodies.				
Greater use of data leading to better resource allocation in Member States ensured.	• As part of the EFA Mid-Decade Assessment, more than 30 national reports and 4 sub-regional reports were produced in Asia and the Pacific.	• This requires continuous technical support and strong collaboration among stakeholders at national and regional levels.			
Data made more pertinent to decision-makers.	• Consultation with stakeholders and redesign of data collection instruments is ongoing. All three education questionnaires will be revised during the biennium. • See sections on international monitoring, statistical capacity building and improving data quality. • While most UIS projects are aimed at national statisticians and policy-planners, the UIS also seeks to build bridges at the school level in order to collect more accurate and policy-relevant data. For example, in Burkina Faso, more than 5,000 heads of schools were trained in the use of national education questionnaires. Improved national data leads to greater use and demand for data by decision-makers. • In a joint project with IIEP, 10 francophone African countries participated in a UIS workshop designed to identify monitoring and policymaking needs for higher education. Participants recommended setting up a network focused specifically on higher education issues in Africa.	• To improve data quality and use at the national and international levels, it is essential to focus on the school level, which constitutes a primary source of data.		The UIS is reinforcing its field presence in order to effectively build regional networks and effective mechanisms for South-South cooperation, especially in sub-Saharan Africa.	
Communications between ministries of education and national statistical offices improved.	• By reinforcing its field presence, the UIS is seeking to ensure that the processes required for reliable and timely education statistics are fully integrated in national strategies for statistical development, which are generally developed by national statistical offices. • See sections on training workshops which are specifically designed to bridge gaps between statisticians and policy-planners in line ministries. • The UIS also mobilizes the support of regional bodies, such as UN Economic Commissions, to reinforce relations between data producers and	• The UIS is reinforcing its network of regional advisors and its field presence in part to reinforce relations between national statistical offices and policy-planners in diverse ministries. This is an ongoing challenge for the Institute.			

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	data users.				
Better quality of data received from countries in terms of comparability at the regional and global levels.	• See section on "Monitoring and evaluation of national and international goals".				

Para. 06012 - MLA 4: Promoting the use and interpretation of evidence-based statistics for monitoring and to inform policy

34 C/5 Expected Results	Achievements	Challenges/ Lessons Learnt	Cost- Effectiveness	Sustainability (Indicators or Measures)	Recommendations by the Executive Board
Programme of research and statistical analysis established in collaboration with a network of research institutions and other organizations conducting monitoring and statistical analysis of policy issues.	• Linkages improved within UNESCO Education Sector, Education Institutes and Field Offices. • Externally, efforts undertaken to improve co-ordination on monitoring and statistical analysis through the creation of technical advisory panels for education finance, teachers and higher education. Interagency groups also established to help guide and promote efforts. • Wide participation in education research conferences, emphasising comparative indicators and the dissemination of UIS analyses.	• Further reflection required to seize the diverse opportunities to better engage stakeholders in data use.	Wider range of users can improve cost-effectiveness.	Wider range of users can contribute to greater sustainability.	
Regional reporting on areas of the UNESCO mandate ensured.	• See section on "Monitoring and evaluation of national and international goals strengthened".				
Policy-relevant statistics and data widely disseminated.	• 42 new indicators and raw data in the fields of culture, communication and education were added to the UIS Data Centre. • Over the past year, the number of UIS web pages viewed has increased by almost 9%. • Number of education data series republished by other agencies remains considerable. • In particular, national EFA mid-decade assessment reports, which feature UIS data, are used in preparing education policy and planning documents such as UNESS, Education Sector Development Plan, etc.		The UIS is undertaking a complete overhaul of its website which will presumably increase the rate of electronic data dissemination. In addition, the websites of the regional bureaux in Santiago and Bangkok have devoted special sections to disseminating UIS data and publications in the respective regions.		

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Analytical UNESCO Institute for Statistics capacity in support of Member States improved.	• UIS regional workshops continue on a regular basis. Discussions on improving data quality and reinforcing relations with line ministries are on-going.				
Research on user satisfaction undertaken.	• User survey planned for 2009.				