

Activities in the field of National Accounts between the Federal Statistical Office of Germany and the National Bureau of Statistics of China

1. General Remarks

The bilateral co-operation programme between the German Federal Statistical Office and the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) is in existence since 1993. The programme encompasses all subject matter areas of official statistics and provides for the exchange of publications, consultation visits by experts, study visits and the scientific dialogue between statisticians from both institutions. The focus of the co-operation activities lies on economic statistics. The German government supports this co-operation programme with a yearly budget of 130.000 EUR.

2. Background SNA Activities

With reference to recent important decisions on future priorities of Chinese official statistics, the Commissioner of the NBS, Mr. Li Deshui suggested to the German side to focus the activities of the bilateral programme on the introduction and implementation of international methodological standards for the calculation of the regional Gross Domestic Product (GDP). There is a growing discrepancy between the centrally calculated GDP and the aggregate of the regional GDP calculations by the provinces. The centrally calculated GDP and the regional aggregates are based on two different methodologies: While the centrally computed GDP is based on the aggregation of the production data by economic sector and respective estimates, the regionally computed GDP is the result of a "bottom-up approach" by which each provincial GDP is added up to a national aggregate. The NBS strives to decrease the discrepancies by improving the methods and procedures of the regional GDP calculation. The German and Chinese sides agreed in their annual bilateral programme planning talks in February 2004 to conduct a study tour for statisticians from the NBS and several provincial statistical offices on the German methods and practices of regional GDP calculations.

3. Activities on National Accounts

Federal Statistical Office of Germany

The above mentioned study tour was conducted from August 4 – 13, 2004, with the aim of presenting the internationally recommended methods and practices for regional GDP calculations and to discuss possible applications to Chinese conditions and requirements.

The following topics were treated in detail:

- Methods and procedures of calculating a national GDP;
- Methods and procedures of deriving regional GDP estimates;
- Analyses and forecasts of GDP.

The Chinese delegation comprised by twelve participants; five experts from the NBS and seven experts from provincial offices. The head of the delegation was Mr. Peng Zhilong, Deputy Director-General of the Department of National Accounts at the NBS; the other delegation members were specialists in the field of national accounts.

In evaluation the activity, the head of the delegation pointed out that the study tour was very useful to the Chinese participants in that detailed and cohesive information was given by the two well prepared experts from the State Statistical Offices of Berlin and Hamburg/Schleswig-Holstein. Later on the Chinese participants received additional documents on the detailed calculation and estimation of regional GDP.

The Chinese side expressed their wish to continue the co-operation with the German experts on this subject matter. The German side is prepared to support the Chinese side in the future as requested.

4. Future Perspectives

Following the above described study tour the German side will conduct a visit by German experts to China on the subject matter as is the standard practice in such bilateral exchanges. The German experts are ready to support their Chinese colleagues in the implementation of the standard methods and practices and to assist in devising solutions which fit the Chinese frame conditions and requirements. The visit by German experts from the two State Offices is planned to take place in the spring of 2005.