



Upcoming Event

MEDSTAT Directors' Committee Meeting

16-17 November 2011 – Luxembourg

The next meeting of the MEDSTAT Directors Committee (DC) will be held in Luxembourg. The main issue to be discussed is a proposal for the strategy of future regional cooperation in statistics. The subject has been treated in several occasions, but the current conditions in the region after the Arab Spring call for a fresh view to support the renewed EU-MED policies and the needs of societies in the MED countries.

Other important issues to be dealt with are quality in statistics and the elaboration of a regional code of practice. A proposal for the work programme for the extended period of MEDSTAT III (May 2012 - December 2013) will be presented.

The participants to the DC were also informed that the 2012 DC will be held back to back with the Quality Conference in Greece in the week of 28 May - 1 June 2012.

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NEWSLETTER

The rhythm of activities of the MEDSTAT III project has not been much altered by the events in the region, which proves the sustained support to statistics in the MED countries. The mandates given by the Directors Committee regarding the improved collaboration with other international organizations in the region have been fulfilled, in particular through the organisation of a number of inter-institutional contacts in the fields of Migration, Energy and Agriculture statistics. After some pause due to the Ramadan and holiday periods, a busy autumn is foreseen, including a special meeting of the Directors Committee to further discuss the future strategy for statistical cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

Follow-up to the 2011 Meeting of the Directors Committee in Istanbul (12-13 April)

At the Istanbul meeting of the DC, the coordination group of the MED-HIMS was given the mandate of approaching potential donors to find funding to carry out the migration surveys in a first group of countries. A Stakeholder and Donors meeting was therefore organised in Cairo on 20 September (further information under "Migration statistics").

In the field of Energy statistics, Eurostat called for meeting with UN-ESCWA to coordinate the efforts in the implementation of final energy consumption surveys. A joint Eurostat-MEDSTAT mission to Beirut in July (21-22) dealt with this important issue (further information under "Energy statistics").

Regarding the preparation of a strategy for the future regional cooperation, the group of experts in charge (Mr. Sufian Abu Harb from the Palestinian CBS, Mrs. Hasnae Fdhil from the Moroccan Directorate for Statistics, Mr. Thierry Paccoud, and Mr. José Cervera, Team Leader) were asked to further elaborate on a proposal, which has been discussed with EuropeAid and Eurostat on 28 September and will be circulated to the MED countries as background for the discussion at the next DC of November.

MEDSTAT III participation in the 5th Arab Forum on Statistical Capacity Building in Amman (4-5 July)

In early July, the 5th Arab Forum on Statistical Capacity Building was held in Amman, organized by PARIS21 in cooperation with the Department of Statistics of Jordan and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, and attended by representatives of the MED countries and international organisations. The main theme was "Statistics, Media and Policy-Making". MEDSTAT III was represented by the Director of ADETEF, Mr. Jan Robert Suesser who presented a paper on the role of official statistics in informing the public debate, and by the Team Leader, Mr. José Cervera, who presented a paper on how to integrate the support to user-producer relationships in international cooperation programmes.

Migration Statistics

As follow-up to the mandate given by the DC, the coordination group of MED-HIMS (Mediterranean Household International Migration Surveys) convened a promotion session within the 5th Arab Forum on Statistical Capacity. Later, a Stakeholders and Donors meeting took place in Cairo, 20 September 2011. Besides the members of this coordination group (EuropeAid, Eurostat, MEDSTAT III, the World Bank and UNHCR, later joined by UNFPA), it was attended by representatives of the League of Arab States, UNICEF, the International Labour Office (ILO), the International Organisation for Migrations (IOM) and other organisations and experts which may provide support to this initiative. Some institutions firmly expressed their willingness to support financially the implementation of the project in a first group of countries (of which Egypt and Jordan will start the preparations in 2012).

Further advocacy actions will be undertaken to extend the group of donors, and a next technical workshop on the MED-HIMS questionnaires and manuals will be organized in early 2012 under the MEDSTAT III programme, coordinated by the KE Mr. Giambattista Cantisani in collaboration with the expert Mr. Samir Farid.

This project is implemented by ADETEF, in partnership with DoS (Jordan), HCP-DS (Morocco), INE (Spain), INE (Portugal), INSEE (France), ISTAT (Italy), KSH (Hungary), ONS (United-Kingdom), Statistics Lithuania, ICON-INSTITUT Public Sector (Germany), InWent (Germany) and SOGETI Luxembourg SA.

A study visit (29 June -2 July) by Palestinian statisticians to the *Direction de la Statistique - HCP* of Morocco was organised to examine the results of the Moroccan migration survey and compare with the Palestinian experience. An important issue was the measurement of international migration of entire households. The study visit was accompanied by the MEDSTAT III short-term expert Mr. Youssef Courbage who has already provided technical assistance to PCBS for the evaluation of their survey.

Social statistics

The coordination of the MEDSTAT III work with that of other international organisations in the region was strengthened through the participation of the Key Expert, Mr. Bahjat Achikbache, in an Expert Group Meeting convened by UN-ESCWA on 29-30 June in Beirut under the topic "Measurement Issues in Labour Statistics". The following issues were discussed: measuring informal employment, underemployment and decent work, employment dynamics, challenges in measuring women's participation in the labour force, data harmonisation and capacity building. The KE presented the experiences in measuring the transition from school to work. As an outcome of the meeting, a concept note on *Strengthening the Capacity of Arab Countries to Produce and Disseminate Labour Statistics* will be further developed. This initiative is in line with the high priority given by the Directors to the issue of labour statistics as one of the major fields of work in the regional cooperation, as expressed during the preparation of a proposal for the future strategy.

A technical assistance mission to the occupied Palestinian territory took place in September (04-08), jointly with INSEE and DIAL, a research centre specialised in surveying the informal sector, to assess the results of the 2008 Module on Informal Employment. The mission was also important to identify the availability of Health statistics and indicators, a field which has been added to the Social sector of MEDSTAT III and for which a programme of technical assistance and harmonisation will be implemented. The mission discussed also the harmonisation of social indicators, and gender statistics.

Transport statistics

Two technical assistance missions were carried out by the Key Expert Mr. Thierry Coulet to Lebanon (31 May - 3 June) and Jordan (27-30 June), dealing with the development of maritime freight transport flows statistics. In both missions, recommendations were also given to the statistical offices for the improvement of the dissemination of maritime transport statistics in their statistical yearbooks.

A training course combined with a study visit on the measurement of road freight and passengers transport volumes has also been organised in Prague (Czech Republic). The course, taught by Mrs. Olga Kastlova and Mr. Milan Brich from the Czech Ministry of Transport and the Transport Research Centre respectively, included presentations on the use and management of vehicle registers and on the different statistical sources (administrative registers and surveys) on transport flows.

The next regional event (29-30 November) in the Transport sector will be a study visit to the Port of Rotterdam (the Netherlands) combined with a training course on the measurement of inter-modal transport infrastructure, equipment and flows, which had to be postponed in the first semester 2011.

Energy statistics

Continuing with the work plan to provide technical assistance to all MED countries for the preparation of Energy Balances and calculation of Energy Efficiency Indicators, the Key Expert, Mr. Aziz Bourahla, carried out missions to Morocco (6-10 June) and Jordan (19-23 June).

As announced during the Istanbul DC, UN-ESCWA prepared a project to support the implementation of Final Energy Consumption (FEC) surveys in the transport sector, a priority identified already during MEDSTAT II. A mission to UN-ESCWA by the MEDSTAT III Key Expert and Mrs. Rosemary Montgomery from Eurostat, to identify synergies and potential collaborations took place in July (22-23). UN-ESCWA plans to hold a technical Expert Group Meeting (EGM) to steer their work, prepare manuals, training material, etc. The next MEDSTAT regional training workshop is foreseen for the end of November in Vienna.

Trade & Balance of Payments statistics

A study visit and a training course on Balance of Payment statistics were organised in Rome (Italy) from 7 to 10 June under the coordination of the KE Mr. Henri Tyrman. The Bank of Italy has carried out in-depth presentations about its experience on a new collection system based on surveys and on its preparation in implementing the new methodology (6th revision of the IMF BoP Manual). ISTAT (Italian NSI) has also presented the national collection system for FATS data. The workshop has allowed to notice significant improvements in several MPCs since the last workshop carried out in Austria in May 2008. All MPCs are aware that a change of collection systems towards direct reporting/surveys is considered as a mean to implement BPM6 and to improve the quality of BOP data, but consider this change as a costly exercise which will take time and need additional resources.

Three missions to analyse mirror statistics (asymmetry studies of foreign trade data with the EU) were carried out by the MEDSTAT expert Mr. Nicola Veronese to Egypt (5-7 July), Algeria (06-08 September) and Morocco (20-22 September).

Training and Dissemination

In the training component, a training-for-trainers course on "The use of administrative sources for the statistical purposes" was held (06-09 June) in the premises of the training centre of INSEE (CEFIL) in Libourne (France). The trainers, Mrs. Kaija Ruotsalainen from Statistics Finland and Mr. Steve Vale from the UNECE presented the EU practice on using administrative data, in particular through the linkage of registers. Techniques for teaching and communication were also presented in order to further reproduce this course at the national level. A course on dealing with non-response in surveys was held in Cairo (in Arabic) for the MED countries of the Mashrek from 9 to 12 October.

Two missions of technical assistance to support the dissemination policy and skills of the staff of the Jordanian (15-19 May) and Algerian (25-28 September) NSIs were carried out by the Key Expert Mr. Driss Afza.

Agriculture statistics

Two sub-regional workshops on the development and use of questionnaires for agricultural surveys were held in Istanbul (18-21 July) and Tunis (26-29 September), in English and French respectively. The experts Mr. Marco Ballin from ISTAT and Mr. Serge Amorich (Ministry of Agriculture, France) presented good practices in the design and use of questionnaires.

In collaboration with FAO and the AITRS, a joint workshop on sampling for agricultural censuses and surveys has been organised, to be held in Amman (16-20 October). The course will present sampling techniques used in agricultural statistics and how to integrate survey frames from different sources to strengthen the Agricultural Statistical System, in line with the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural statistics.