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## **Activities implemented in the field of statistics**

### **Technical cooperation activities**

#### **Summary**

The present document sets out the technical cooperation activities undertaken by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) in the field of statistics from January 2017 to December 2018, including advisory services, workshops, fellowship programmes and capacity-building activities

The Statistical Committee is invited to take note of the present document and provide proposals on strengthening technical cooperation services in line with the needs and priorities of member States.

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## Introduction

1. Technical cooperation activities by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) are designed to meet the needs of member States, and are generally provided on demand. In addition to the flexibility of the Regular Programme for Technical Cooperation (RPTC) in tackling emerging and urgent issues, it has recently succeeded in shifting towards a results-oriented work strategy, based on developing comprehensive national frameworks for coordinated cooperation. The ESCWA secretariat aims to use those frameworks as an integrated planning tool to increase the effectiveness of technical cooperation and strengthen transparency and accountability in activity implementation. ESCWA considers technical cooperation activities a priority, alongside data collection, production and dissemination; coordination; and forging regional partnerships.

2. ESCWA work in the field of statistics aims to support national and regional statistical systems in producing and disseminating quality statistics to formulate evidence-based policies and monitor progress towards inclusive and sustainable development. Most technical cooperation activities are implemented in coordination with the regional offices of specialized United Nations organizations and other regional and international organizations. The present document summarizes the technical cooperation activities undertaken by the secretariat from January 2017 to December 2018, and addresses the challenges faced in the implementation of technical cooperation programmes and services, and ways to improve on them.

### I. ADVISORY SERVICES

3. Table 1 sets out advisory services provided by the secretariat from January 2017 to December 2018, listed by recipient and type of activity. Those services aimed to build member States' capacity to adopt the System of National Accounts (SNA) as a general and comprehensive framework. The adoption of a unified system allows for the integration of various economic statistics in a single framework, such as supply and use tables, so as to achieve integration between various economic statistics, notably national accounts statistics, affiliated accounts, trade and business statistics, statistics for various economic sectors, and estimates related to the informal economy.

4. The ESCWA secretariat also supports member States in developing the required statistical infrastructure, mainly international classifications, information and communications technology, and statistical business registers. The secretariat organized workshops and advisory missions to that end.

TABLE 1. ADVISORY SERVICES

Recipient country	No. of services	Activity
Jordan	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducting an advisory mission to the Department of Statistics to evaluate civil registry data, vital statistics and poverty statistics (Amman, 12-16 March 2018);</li> <li>• Conducting an advisory mission to prepare simplified supply and use tables based on available data, aimed at improving data sources and preparing estimates on informal activities (Amman, 4-10 November 2017);</li> <li>• Launching an e-learning platform on gender statistics in a workshop, to benefit the Department of Statistics and the Jordanian National Commission for Women (Amman, 14 October 2017);</li> <li>• Conducting an advisory mission to the Department of Statistics to review methodologies and data sources related to quarterly GDP estimates so as to align them with annual estimates (Amman, 30 September – 7 October 2017);</li> </ul>

Recipient country	No. of services	Activity
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visiting the Department of Statistics to review annual GDP estimates with 2010 as the new base year, and providing recommendations for their improvements (Amman, 10-16 June 2017).</li> </ul>
United Arab Emirates	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing advisory services to the Centre for Statistics and Studies in Ras al Khaimah aimed at following up on planning work for a mini census (23-24 May 2018);</li> <li>• Providing advisory services to the Ajman Statistics and Competitiveness Centre on population projections (27-30 August 2018);</li> <li>• Providing advisory services to the Centre for Statistics and Studies in Ras al Khaimah on planning population censuses using alternative methods and technology (21-22 February 2018);</li> <li>• Conducting advisory missions to the Ajman Statistics and Competitiveness Centre on quality control in the general population and household census (5-8 March and 24-25 May 2017);</li> <li>• Providing technical support to the Centre for Statistics and Studies in Ras al Khaimah on ways to prepare national accounts estimates and other economic statistics, especially those related to sustainable development indicators (21-26 January 2017).</li> </ul>
Bahrain	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holding a workshop on preparing simplified supply and use tables based on available data, aimed at improving data sources and preparing estimates on informal activities, for the benefit of the Information and e-Government Authority (6-10 May 2018).</li> </ul>
Syrian Arab Republic	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing advisory services to the Central Bureau of Statistics on evaluating statistics and identifying requirements to improve statistics from national accounts and economic surveys by developing simplified supply and use tables (Damascus, 14-16 August 2018).</li> </ul>
Sudan	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing advisory services to the Ministry of Finance and the Africa City of Technology to evaluate statistics and identify requirements for developing a social accounting matrix, and preparing simplified supply and use tables as a pillar for input and output tables and, in turn, a social accounting matrix (Khartoum, 28-30 March 2017).</li> </ul>
Iraq	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holding a consultative workshop on conducting a population and housing census using technology in Iraq in the 2020 census round (Beirut, 30 April – 1 May 2018);</li> <li>• Training six delegates from the Iraqi Central Statistical Organization on supply and use tables (Beirut, 14-17 August 2017).</li> </ul>
State of Palestine	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing to the National Poverty Commission a project on calculating multidimensional poverty in the State of Palestine, and reviewing sample design and tools for a future survey of living standards in the Gaza Strip (Ramallah, 5-9 July 2018);</li> <li>• Revising the dimensions and indicators of the project on calculating multidimensional poverty in the State of Palestine based on the results of a full round (12 months) of the consumption and expenditure survey (Ramallah, 30 April – 7 May 2018);</li> </ul>

Recipient country	No. of services	Activity
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewing the completed data of the consumption and expenditure survey in the State of Palestine to assess quality and potential bias from non-response, and estimating poverty levels and using the 2011 poverty line to update living costs over time (19-25 January 2018);</li> <li>• Reviewing the findings of a post-enumeration study on the 2017 round of population and housing censuses, and calculating coverage levels (19-25 January 2018);</li> <li>• Conducting a final review of proposed multidimensional poverty dimensions and indicators based on the results of data collected from the consumption and expenditure survey in the State of Palestine over the first six months of the year (24-31 July 2017);</li> <li>• Holding a workshop for three delegates from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics to discuss preparing simplified supply and use tables based on available data aimed at improving data sources and estimates of informal activities (Amman, 16-20 April 2017);</li> <li>• Preparing a study on the feasibility and work scope of record linkage of data from the population register and censuses in the State of Palestine, and reviewing the current status of civil registration and vital statistics to identify requirements for improving the civil registration system (9-13 April 2017).</li> </ul>
Qatar	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participating in a workshop on updating official statistics in the Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics (Doha, 25-26 September 2018);</li> <li>• Conducting an advisory mission to the Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics to provide support on using administrative registry data in the general population and housing census (14-18 May 2017).</li> </ul>
Kuwait	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visiting the Central Statistics Bureau to review methodologies and data sources used in estimating quarterly GDP (Kuwait City, 8-14 April 2017).</li> </ul>
Lebanon		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducting advisory missions on conducting a post-enumeration survey and disseminating and using population census data in refugee camps and communities (Beirut, August and September 2017).</li> </ul>
Libya	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holding a training workshop for delegates from the Bureau of Statistics and Census to increase benefits from technical assistance provided to the Bureau on economic surveys, collecting producer price indices, and preparing simplified supply and use tables (18-21 December 2017);</li> <li>• Holding a national workshop on disability statistics following a request by the Bureau of Statistics and Census (7-9 August 2018).</li> </ul>
Egypt	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducting an advisory mission to the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics to evaluate data from the civil registry and populations censuses (Cairo, 8-10 May 2018);</li> <li>• Providing technical guidance to the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics on conducting a survey on violence against women with disabilities (Cairo, 16 September 2018);</li> </ul>

Recipient country	No. of services	Activity
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing advisory services to the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics on preparing detailed estimates of GDP by final expenditure in line with the details required to calculate weights for the International Comparison Programme (Cairo, 25-28 April 2017).</li> </ul>
Morocco	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responding to a request by the statistics unit of the Ministry of Industry, Investment, Trade and Digital Economy to provide support for reviewing the results of industry surveys and coordinating with experts from the High Commission for Planning to adopt activity classifications in line the principles of national accounting (Rabat, 16-18 April 2017).</li> </ul>
Saudi Arabia	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Holding a meeting to discuss the needs of the General Authority for Statistics for technical assistance on economic statistics (Riyadh, 20-23 March 2017).</li> </ul>
Mauritania	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing advisory services to the National Office of Statistics to evaluate available statistics and develop a workplan to improve the comprehensiveness of estimates, methodologies and data sources; and evaluating achievements in estimating informal transboundary trade and construction activities (Nouakchott, 13-17 February 2017).</li> </ul>
Yemen	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conducting a study visit by a Yemeni delegate from the Central Statistical Office to ESCWA headquarters for training on new SNA methodologies (20-26 October 2017).</li> </ul>
Total	35	

## II. WORKSHOPS

5. Table 2 sets out workshops held as part of technical cooperation services to build capacity in the field of statistics from January 2017 to December 2018.

TABLE 2. WORKSHOPS

Topic and objectives	Venue	Date	No. of male participants	No. of female participants
Two training workshops: the first on energy data under the Joint Oil Data Initiative, aimed at improving the collection and quality of monthly data on energy and gas; and the second on the energy balance, in collaboration with the International Energy Forum, the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), the International Energy Agency and the Gas Exporting Countries Forum, aimed at annual data compilation for fuels and flows to build a national energy balance and for evidence-based policymaking.	Beirut	11-14 December 2018	41	18

Topic and objectives	Venue	Date	No. of male participants	No. of female participants
Workshop on environment statistics and information for sustainable development in the Arab region, in collaboration with UNSD, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the European Environment Agency, focusing on building national capacity to implement the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics that was endorsed by the United Nations Statistical Commission to strengthen countries' environment statistics programmes, and on waste and water statistics, environment-related SDG indicators and climate change statistics.	Beirut	12-16 November 2018	50	15
Workshop on Islamic finance in national accounts, in collaboration with the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries and UNSD, to examine how Islamic finance sectors, instruments, output and value added should be handled in national accounts.	Ankara	31 October – 2 November 2018	27	5
Regional meeting to evaluate price statistics and coordinate price indices for the period 2011-2016, aimed at reviewing the time series of price data and expenditure data for that period, and at validating or amending them to achieve a series that is consistent and reflects national realities in each country, so as to ensure consistency between various price indices.	Cairo	3-6 September 2018	11	9
Workshop on planning for population and housing censuses by using technology in selected Arab countries aimed at presenting international and Arab experiences and practices related to alternatives ways of conducting or planning censuses using technology.	Beirut	24-27 July 2018	17	5
Workshop on Islamic finance in national accounts, aimed at discussing the sectorization of Islamic financial institutions, classifying and recording Islamic financial instruments and corresponding property income and related transactions; and calculating and recording the output of Islamic financial services in national accounts.	Beirut	24-26 October 2017	27	10
National workshop on input and output tables as technical support for the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics.	Amman	17-20 April 2017	20	10

Topic and objectives	Venue	Date	No. of male participants	No. of female participants
Second regional workshop on the 2020 round of population and housing census (2015-2024).	Cairo	22-23 January 2017	20	5
National training workshop on methods and sources used to collect regional GDP estimates at the level of the United Arab Emirates.	Abu Dhabi	22-26 January 2017	25	3
Functional training workshop for staff members at the Centre for Statistics and Studies in Ras al Khaimah on demographic and social indicators.	Ras al Khaimah, United Arab Emirates	22 February – 2 March 2017	20	3
Third regional meeting of the working group on sustainable development indicators.	Jordan	13-15 March 2017	20	5
Regional workshop on improving disability statistics under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Arab countries.	Rabat	17-20 April 2017	26	18
National training workshop on supply and use in Iraq for the Iraqi Central Statistical Organization.	Beirut	14-17 August 2017	15	3
National workshop on population and housing censuses: how federal systems design and implement population censuses.	Ajman, United Arab Emirates	16-17 October 2017	15	9
National workshop on producer price indices in the industry sector (for the benefit of the Libyan Bureau of Statistics and Census).	Beirut	18-20 December 2017	4	4
Workshop on improving disability data in Arab countries.	Casablanca, Morocco	17-20 April 2017	5	13
Regional training workshop to develop vital statistics reports from civil registration.	Beirut	10-11 October 2018	12	4
Consultative meeting on planning a survey of humanitarian needs in Yemen, aimed at developing a workplan for the survey and reviewing the experiences of countries that have conducted surveys in similar circumstances.	Beirut	14-16 November 2018	8	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>19 workshops</b>		<b>363</b>	<b>144</b>

### III. CHALLENGES AND THE WAY FORWARD

6. The Arab region continues to witness transformations and economic and social crises, which pose challenges that have redefined priorities in the field of statistics. Meeting countries' needs for data and information requires innovative measures, increased activities at the national level, and further advisory missions in the field of social, demographic and economic statistics.

7. It is vital to strengthen regional cooperation with regional statistical agencies, such as the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics, the Statistical Centre for the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC-Stat), the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries, and the Arab Monetary Fund. Those agencies are not part of Regional Coordination Mechanism that includes United Nations organizations working in the Arab region, but play a key role in the field of statistics. The ESCWA secretariat continues to invite those organizations to participate in the sessions of the Statistical Committee, which can provide a platform for dialogue on regional priorities in the field of statistics, and thus increase coordination of technical cooperation activities.
8. The secretariat aims to support national statistical offices in their work to monitor progress towards achieving the 2030 Agenda and to prepare reports in that regard. It will also increase understanding of key developments in data collection, processing, updating and dissemination, especially using modern technologies.
9. The Statistical Committee is invited to provide proposals on operationalizing technical cooperation services, in line with member States' needs and priorities.

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