

## MEDSTAT II Training

Task Force meeting  
13-14 July 2009 Istanbul, Turkey

### MAIN CONCLUSIONS and DECISIONS

The third MEDSTAT II Training Task Force (TF) meeting was convened to review the training activities of the MEDSTAT II Training sector performed during 2007, 2008 and 2009 and to take stock of the achieved results. The third objective of the meeting was to identify the priority needs of the countries in terms of training for the after-Medstat II period.

The meeting brought together the National Training Coordinators from each Mediterranean Partner Country (MPC), except for Algeria and Syria.

Representatives from the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC) also attended this meeting.

The Task Force was chaired by the European Commission (EC). This task was delegated by DG Aidco to DG Estat. An appropriate disclaimer was made at the very beginning of the meeting.

The first part of the meeting was dedicated to two presentations on training projects implemented in the MPCs. The first was given by the Moroccan statistical office (DS – HCP) and the second by the Long-Term Expert on Training (LTE) on behalf the Algerian statistical office (ONS).

The TF concluded that both presentations on training projects implemented by those MPCs were interesting in the context of exchange of good practices. The participants took note of the amount of the financial resources devoted to those projects and considered that as a proof that training is of a strategic importance in those MPCs. The representative of EFTA invited the Moroccan representative to the annual meeting of the European Statistical Training Programme Working Group meeting to present the Moroccan 'Five-Year Training Plan' that was considered by the TF as an interesting initiative that may serve as source of inspiration for both MPCs and Member States when defining their long term training strategies and policies.

The presentation of the Palestinian statistical office (PCBS) on their training system was an occasion for some reflection and exchange of views. The PCBS presented the organization of the training activities and the steps in designing and implementation of the annual training programme as well as the main indicators on training. The participants asked interesting questions and were impressed by the number of trained persons by the PCBS.

#### ➤ *Evaluation of the 2007 and 2008/2009 training programmes:*

The two Evaluation Reports concerning the training programme 2007 and 2008/2009 were presented by the Long Term Expert in terms of activities (training courses, training of trainers and e-learning courses) as well as of indicators (main indicators from the evaluation by the participants) and were thoroughly discussed.

The TF acknowledge the high quality of those training programmes and the very good results achieved for the benefit of the MPCs statisticians.

The TF agreed with the conclusions drawn by the LTE that more emphasis should be put on the process of the selection of participants and more attention should be given to the preparation of the future participants prior to their participation in the courses. The trainers and contractors implementing the trainings should always keep in mind the proper balance between theory and practice.



This project is funded by the European Union



➤ *Conclusions & recommendations from the implementation of MEDSTAT II Training*

The Long Term Expert presented the main recommendations and conclusions from the implementation of the MEDSTAT II training, based on the document prepared for the TF (see attachment).

The TF adopted the following 12 points that should serve as the fundamental principles for the organisation of training activities under future MEDSTAT programmes:

1. Planning of the annual training programme
2. Registration of candidates
3. Selection of participants
4. Dissemination of course material
5. Preparation of the participants
6. Course balance (theory and practice)
7. Course language and interpretation
8. Logistics issues
9. Training packages
10. Restitution of knowledge
11. Training of trainers
12. E-learning courses

Point 9 on “training packages” was thoroughly discussed. The TF welcomed the proposal to deliver training, whenever possible, in the form of packages rather than as stand alone courses as this will allow organising more training activities with the same budget.

➤ *Post evaluation procedures:*

As far as the post evaluation procedures are concerned, the participants agreed that there is a necessity to continue them. However, as it was already discussed during the previous TF meeting, the period of six months for their implementation is not realistic since it is too short. It was decided that the post-evaluation exercise should be linked with the human resources management agenda and consequently the post evaluation questionnaire should be filled in during the annual performance assessment meeting with the immediate superior of the participant and the feed back should be forwarded to the NC for training for the purpose of the evaluation of the training courses of the different national and international training programmes. The participants took note of the fact that those evaluations will provide a feedback to the Commission as well as to the MPCs to be used for joint monitoring of the impact of the MEDSTAT Training component on the performance of the national statistical systems. They confirmed that the monitoring and evaluation of training activities is a crucial part of the MEDSTAT programme.

➤ *Priority Training needs of the countries after MEDSTAT II:*

The MPCs expressed their opinions and priorities in the field of training specifying particular areas that need attention. Eurostat has taken note of the countries priorities. The contractors did not participate in that part of the meeting.



➤ *Training of trainers experience*

The experience of the training of trainers under MEDSTAT II Training was presented and discussed. The discussion focused on the countries' experience with the implementation of those trainings at the national level. The TF confirmed that the MPCs were very much interested in those courses since they are very efficient in satisfying their training needs.

The MPCs were encouraged to implement the national courses in the topics covered by the training of trainers under MEDSTAT II Training as soon as possible in order to give the opportunity to the trained persons to practice their skills as the trainers.

➤ *E-learning experience*

E-learning course organized under MEDSTAT II were presented and discussed. The TF confirmed the interest for such means and tools for delivering training.

Israel made a presentation on the national experience with the implementation of the e-learning course developed by MEDSTAT II in the National Accounts sector. The LTE, on behalf of the Director of National Accounts of Algeria, presented the national experience with that e-learning course. In Algeria different partners of the NSS benefitted from that course. MPCs were encouraged to implement at the national level the e-learning courses in order to disseminate the knowledge and to train as many staff members as possible of the NSI and other stakeholders of the NSS.

A discussion on the ways to enable smooth implementation of the courses at the national level was held. It was agreed that a face to face session should be organized and attended by one future tutor per MPC.

➤ *Means and tools for wider dissemination of knowledge*

The management of the knowledge cumulated and delivered during training courses and workshops that represents a huge investment in terms of human and financial resources was discussed. Means and tools were discussed and the MPC were encouraged to organize the storage and dissemination of the knowledge to all stakeholders of the NSS.

➤ *Synergies with international donors active in statistical training*

In the context of developing synergies with other organizations providing training activities and to avoid duplications, the EC invited EFTA and SESRIC (Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries) to present their activities.

The EFTA representative presented training courses organized for MPCs in 2007, 2008 and those that EFTA will offer during autumn 2009. The TF members appreciated that offer which will constitute a bridge between MEDSTAT II and MEDSTAT III.

The SESRIC presented its training activities and declared its interest in cooperating within the EC programmes such as MEDSTAT training sector whenever feasible. Since eight out of nine MPCs are members of the OIC (Organization of the Islamic Conference), the SESRIC declared its interest in close cooperation with the eight MPCs on training synergy.

All the objectives of the Task Force have been achieved.



This project is funded by the European Union



## Annexes

Annex 1: Agenda

Annex 2: List of participants

Annex 3: Conclusions and Recommendations



This project is funded by the European Union



## ANNEX 1

### MEDSTAT II - Training TASK FORCE

**Dates: 14-15 July 2009**

**Venue: Istanbul, Turkey**

#### Agenda

#### 14th July

- 09:30- 09:40** Opening Ms. J. SZCZERBINSKA, Eurostat
- 09:50- 10:10** Training projects within the  
Mediterranean Partners NSIs  
Presentations from: Algeria Mr. H. Zidouni, ONS DZ
- 10:10- 10:30** Training projects within the  
Mediterranean Partners NSIs  
Presentations from: Morocco Ms. H.Fdhil, HCP MA
- 10:30- 11:00** *Coffee break*
- 11:00- 11:20** Training systems within the  
Mediterranean Partners NSIs  
Presentations from:  
Occupied Palestinian territory Mr. S.A Bsharat, PCBS PS
- 11:20- 12:00** Round table discussion
- 12:00- 14:00** *Lunch break*
- 13:45-14: 15** Evaluation on the training programme 2007 Mr.D. Afza
- 14:15 -14:45** Evaluation on the training programme 2008/2009 Mr.D. Afza
- 14:45 - 15: 15** Conclusions and Recommendations from the implementation  
of MEDSTAT II Training Mr.D. Afza
- 15:15- 15:35** *Coffee break*
- 15:35- 16:15** Round table discussion on lessons learnt from MEDSTAT II Training
- 16:15- 16:45** Discussion on Post evaluation exercise  
Experiences/difficulties of implementation



This project is funded by the European Union



## **15th July**

- 09:00-09:30** Training priorities expressed by MPCs for the period beyond 2009:  
*Training courses*  
*Technical assistance* Ms. J. SZCZERBINSKA, Eurostat
- 09:30- 10:00** Training priorities expressed by MPCs for the period beyond 2009:  
*Round table discussion*
- 10:00- 10:45** Training of trainers experiences (restitution at national level) NCs
- 10:45 - 11:00** *Coffee break*
- 1100- 11:45** E-learning experience:  
*Presentation of national restitution:*  
e-learning course on National Accounts :  
*Algeria:* Mr. D. Afza  
*Israel:* Mr. H. Zidouni  
Ms. M. Flanzer
- 11:45 -12:15** Discussion on means and tools for:  
Wider dissemination of knowledge  
Knowledge management Within the NSS of MPCs
- 12:15- 13:30** *Lunch break*
- 13:30- 13:50** Synergies with International donors  
active in Statistical training  
Presentation from: EFTA Mr.G. Gamez
- 13:50- 14:10** Synergies with International donors  
active in Statistical training  
Presentation from: SESRIC Ms. Dr.S. Başçi
- 14:10 - 14:40** Round table discussion
- 14:40 - 15:00** Conclusions
- 15:00-** Closure



## ANNEX II

### Participants list

Country	Name	Forename
EGYPT	M.ABBAS	Omar
ISRAEL	FLANZER	Margalit
JORDAN	DABBAS	Omaima
LEBANON	AL JAMMAL YAACOUB	Amer Najwa
MOROCCO	FDHIL	Hasnae
Occupied Palestinian Territory	BSHARAT	Said
TUNISIA	RABHI	Mohamed Larbi
EUROSTAT-EC	SZCZERBINSKA	Jolanta
LOT 1	BLICKENSDOERFER	Inka
LOT 1	AFZA	Driss
EFTA	GAMEZ	Gabriel
SESRIC	BASCI	Sidika



## ANNEX III

### Conclusions and Recommendations

The following conclusions and recommendation are adopted by the third meeting of the Task Force MEDSTAT II Training as the fundamental principles for the organisation of training activities under MEDSTAT programmes:

#### 1. Planning of the annual training programme

The announcement of the training programmes should be made early in advance by the EC in order to give enough time for the MPCs to plan their participation in the different courses. The Directors Committee discussed this issue during its meeting in February 2008 held in Luxembourg at which the MPCs expressed that request.

For the annual planning of training activities a document should be drafted specifying the dates of the courses and the dates for submitting the names of candidates in order to meet the deadlines. This will allow candidates to be informed early enough to plan their availability and organise their duties accordingly.

#### 2. Registration of candidates

Some MPCs requested an official invitation to be sent in addition to the announcement received from EuropeAid in order to be able to launch the registration procedures. It is confirmed that it is possible to send customised invitations upon request.

Despite the early announcement of the ITP 2007 and 2008/09, the registration deadlines for the training courses — which had been provided in the announcements — were rarely met. It was necessary to make individual contacts and to send reminders in order to complete the registration of candidates from all MPCs.

The MPCs were made aware that if the registration deadlines are not met; all the subsequent organisational steps are delayed, including:

Selection procedures,

Sending of individual invitations,

Visa procedures (all the EU embassies have to apply strict rules for visa applications)

Travel arrangements (airline tickets can be more expensive if booked late, and direct flights can be fully booked).

#### 3. Selection of participants

The selection of participants is a key element that contributes to the success of a training course. Indeed, a careful selection of candidates helps to form homogeneous groups in terms of:

- language skills

- background skills that should match the course level (course description).

The role of the MPCs cannot be underestimated in that process, since they know best the actual skills and competences of the candidates.





In the past the registration forms were often not filled in properly, especially in the part concerning the preparatory steps. The NCs should therefore explain to the candidates the objective of this part of the registration form and refuse to transmit registration forms that not duly completed.

This information is important as it provides the Commission and the training course organisers with a general idea of the skill levels of the candidates.

In regional programmes, the selection procedure should be given more emphasis in order to maximise the benefits from the training course. Working with very heterogeneous groups cannot fully satisfy all participants' expectations, even if the trainers are very qualified.

The immediate supervisor of the candidate should be involved in the selection phase with the NC.

#### **4. Dissemination of course material**

A system enabling participants to acknowledge receipt of course material should be established to monitor the proper dissemination of the course materials. This can be done most efficiently if all participants have e-mail addresses; otherwise the reception and dissemination should be checked by the NC.

Without the appropriate course material, participants will not be able to prepare properly for the course.

#### **5. Preparation of the participants**

A good preparation is certainly the best way for the candidates to play an active role in the training course.

Participants should be supported by their respective organisations and be given enough time to prepare and to read the course material.

A good preparation enables participants to ask for clarification of difficult issues and to discuss relevant points with the trainer and other participants.

This preparation period should be closely followed by the training course organisers.

#### **6. Course balance (theory and practice)**

The share of time devoted to practical work and exercises should be increased. The trainers should prepare many study cases and foresee the use of statistical software whenever possible.

The part related to theoretical concepts and presentations should be shortened; in any case, this part, if possible, should be mastered by the participants during the preparation before the course. It should be noted that this part remains fundamental for the course; if it is not mastered by the participants, mistakes could be made in applying the concepts, thus affecting the quality of the work carried out. This is especially valid for trainings in the field of data collection (sampling techniques and procedures).

The participants should play an active role in the preparation of the practical exercises. They should prepare a set of data and send it in advance in order to give the trainers the



opportunity to study them and prepare study cases; this input can trigger useful discussions and exchanges of best practices.

The group work should always be foreseen in the practical part of the course; working in groups is useful to discuss issues and to reach common conclusions to be presented in a plenary session.

The use of PCs should be the rule for all training courses: hands-on training courses are always highly appreciated by course participants.

## **7. Course language and interpretation**

As a rule, the training course should be held in only one language. Indeed, a common language is essential to maximise benefits from the course content and to actively participate in discussions and experience sharing.

Simultaneous interpretation is not always an ideal solution, and it should only be used for non-technical courses. Finding interpreters specialising in the area of statistics is often very difficult.

Most of the MPCs use as a working language in daily work Arabic and French.

If the expertise is not available in those languages, the training organisers should follow closely the translation of course material and the preparation with the interpreters. In this respect, working with the same interpreters by providing them the course material in advance can greatly reduce the risk of errors in the interpretation.

## **8. Logistics issues**

### **8.1 Training facilities**

The adequate training facilities certainly have a good impact on the general satisfaction derived from a training course.

As a rule, when the courses are organised in a training institute or in an NSI, there are fewer problems than when the courses are organised in other locations and they can be solved promptly.

Cooperation with training institutes should always be sought for the success of the training courses. In addition, the training facilities provided by NSIs are generally cheaper than those provided by hotels.

### **8.2 Invitations and visa**

A timely registration allows course participants to receive individual invitations sufficiently in advance to apply for and receive a visa. In this respect, invitations should be sent at least one month before the start of the course.

All the EU embassies must apply strict rules for visa applications; accordingly, the course participants who apply for a visa too late may not get a visa in time to attend the course.

In many cases, when a visa is not delivered in time, the MEDSTAT II budget bears the cost of all or part of the airline ticket.

The organisation of events in the new Member States should be given particular attention. Indeed, new Member States generally have very few diplomatic representations in the MPCs.



## **9. Training packages**

The all-inclusive training packages should be analysed as a specific option to reduce the cost of training events. Agreements with one or two training institutes for all training events make it possible to negotiate special rates for accommodation, meals and training facilities that are cheaper than distributing per diem allowances and paying for the training facilities separately.

The aim is to provide high-quality facilities and to reduce the total cost of each event, which makes it possible to organise more training events with the same budget allocated by the European Commission.

Past experience has proved the efficiency of such solutions.

## **10. Restitution of knowledge:**

It is important to organise the restitution of knowledge acquired during the training courses at national level. This enables knowledge to be shared more widely among NSI staff and NSS.

## **11. Training of trainers:**

This form of training is very popular among MPCs. In order to maximise the benefits from this exercise, trained persons should be supported to be the leaders for organising training courses at national level within NSIs and NSS.

All trained persons were motivated to do so, and agreed to organise at least two training courses at the national level.

The aim is to ensure that MPCs are able to satisfy their training needs independently via training courses on the topics covered by Medstat II and that future MEDSTAT training programmes should only focus on other training topics (those not covered by the training courses for trainers).

## **12. E-learning courses:**

The experience under MEDSTAT was successful. E-learning courses can satisfy some training needs, but they cannot fully replace the face-to-face courses.

E-learning courses should also be foreseen in future training programmes and MPCs should provide technical equipment to participants in order to be able to follow e-learning courses in good conditions.

