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This article forms part of a [set of background articles](#) which introduces the international statistical cooperation activities of the [European Union \(EU\)](#) with non-member countries and focuses on cooperation with Mediterranean countries in the context of the [European Neighbourhood Policy \(ENP\)](#), in other words the ENP-South countries. The principal vehicle by which the EU has provided assistance on statistics to ENP-South countries since 1996 has been the regional MEDSTAT programme.

Countries concerned

The MEDSTAT programme covers ten ENP-South countries: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine¹, Syria² and Tunisia.

MEDSTAT V (2022-2025)

The fifth MEDSTAT programme was launched in January 2022 for a duration of four years, until end 2025. The programme consolidates and builds on work done under previous phases as well as addresses new EU priorities and statistical developments.

Previous MEDSTAT programmes

Through three distinct phases (MEDSTAT I, II and III), the cooperation programme developed from focusing on capacity building work to improving the quality of statistics and providing the foundation for evidence-based policymaking. Euro-Mediterranean statistical cooperation was launched by the [Barcelona declaration and the Euro-Mediterranean partnership](#) (1995–96) with the aim of promoting 'cooperation in statistics in order to harmonise methods and exchange data'. MEDSTAT IV built on the progress achieved and added further improvements to the methodology of statistical data production.

MEDSTAT I (1996-2003) — the first cooperation programme

The main objective of MEDSTAT I was to provide the foundations for a standardised collection and exchange of reliable, harmonised and up-to-date statistics, which in turn would allow the EU to monitor the development of a free trade area (for manufactured goods) in the whole Mediterranean basin. The programme covered six thematic

¹This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue.

²Cooperation with Syria is currently suspended.

sectors (international trade in goods and services, transport, migration, tourism, the environment and national accounts) and two cross-cutting activities (training and information systems).

MEDSTAT II (2006-2009) — improving the quality of statistical services

MEDSTAT II was mainly intended to improve the quality of statistical services through the consolidation of Euro-Mediterranean statistical cooperation. A further objective was to foster the development of statistical information systems in the Mediterranean countries, in other words to improve the quality of the compilation and exchange of statistical data between the EU and the Mediterranean countries. These joint efforts were centred on:

- collecting timely, relevant and high-quality data, necessary for political decision-making and ensuring good governance;
- the provision of assistance to the national statistical systems of the Mediterranean beneficiary countries;
- the promotion of the transparency of statistical activities.

Following an assessment of the statistical situation in each beneficiary country ([country statistical situation report — CSSR](#)), the [European Commission](#) , in cooperation with each of the Mediterranean beneficiary countries, identified priorities regarding necessary actions. As a result, in addition to the six statistical topics covered by MEDSTAT I, the scope of MEDSTAT II was extended to include the following topics: social, agriculture and energy statistics.

MEDSTAT III (2010-2013) — promoting evidence-based policymaking

MEDSTAT III built on the achievements of the previous two programmes and aimed to consolidate and further strengthen statistical cooperation. MEDSTAT III was launched in April 2010 and completed by the end of 2013.

The overall objective of MEDSTAT III was to promote evidence-based decision-making and to stimulate democratic development by improving the availability and use of statistical data in ENP-South countries. Moreover, it aimed to consolidate and expand further the progress achieved during the previous two programmes by providing users with a wider range of quality data for six priority topics — agriculture, energy, migration, social statistics, transport, and international trade and balance of payments statistics — as well as the cross-cutting activities of training and dissemination.

MEDSTAT IV (2016-2019) — improving quality and coverage of data

The fourth phase was officially launched in January 2016 and ended in August 2019. The MEDSTAT IV programme provided expertise and technical support to:

- promote the harmonisation of statistics in line with EU and international standards in six domains (business registers and business statistics, trade statistics and balance of payments, energy statistics, labour market statistics, migration statistics and transport statistics);
- help implement the [Statistics Code of Practice for the European Neighbourhood South Countries](#) (based on the [European statistics Code of Practice](#)) and improve the quality of statistics;
- provide training on statistical methods and tools; and
- ensure availability and visibility of a wide range of data.

The overall objective of the MEDSTAT IV programme was to promote evidence-based decision-making and to foster democratic development by improving the availability, visibility and accessibility of robust, reliable and timely statistical data in the ENP-South countries.

Working groups covering the thematic domains mentioned above and the cross-cutting issues (quality, gender, training and visibility) were set-up and led by one or more partner countries to ensure ownership. The quality working group, which functions independently of MEDSTAT, is led by [Eurostat](#) . It promotes the development of a culture of quality in statistics in the ENP-South countries.

More than 100 activities were implemented during MEDSTAT IV's timeframe. MEDSTAT IV provided technical and financial support to organise a wide set of events such as working group meetings, workshops, training sessions, study visits and technical assistance missions by experts.

Addressing user needs in the preparation of the work programmes and consulting users on their needs for data analysis and dissemination, both nationally and regionally, aimed to make the supply of statistics more relevant to the demand and to raise the visibility of statistics. The programme sought a stronger involvement of users in defining the needs for statistics as well as promoting and supporting joint activities and projects with users in order to obtain their feedback on the quality, including relevance, of the available statistics.

MEDSTAT IV also sought to establish synergies among activities in each sector, between the thematic working groups, between the thematic working groups and the cross-cutting issues, and between the project activities and those organised by other international organisations operating in the region.

Other articles

- [International statistical cooperation](#) — online publication

Database

- [Southern European Neighbourhood Policy countries \(ENP-South\) \(enps\)](#)

Dedicated section

- [MEDSTAT programme](#)

Publications

- [All publications on European Neighbourhood Policy countries](#)

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