



STEP

Statistics
Through
Eastern
Partnership

NEWS

STATISTICS THROUGH EASTERN PARTNERSHIP NEWSLETTER

IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF OFFICIAL STATISTICAL DATA IN THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP REGION



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CONTEXT

The six Eastern Partnership countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, share a common past in a centralised economy.

Although they have evolved at their own pace in slightly different directions, they face social problems, common economic, political and social challenges. Dealing with them requires access to reliable, up-to-date information to guide policy development and impact assessments.

The institutions involved in the production and dissemination of official statistics play a key role in this process, thus supporting them is essential.

EU statistical standards are among the most elaborate. Therefore, the project seeks to support the six Eastern Partnership countries in their efforts to align their statistical systems with European standards.

THE STEP PROGRAMME

The **STEP** programme is funded by the European Union. Eurostat manages it, whereas Expertise France implements it in Consortium with National European Statistical Institutes of: France (INSEE), Hungary (HSCO), Italy (ISTAT), Denmark (SD) and Lithuania (SL).

It started on 1st January 2019 for a period of 34 months.

The STEP technical team is composed of 3 Keys experts that cover the main thematic areas of the project.

In addition, a dedicated management team based in Paris assures the coordination and the global running of the project.

The overall purpose of the programme is to strengthen the Statistical System of the European Partnership countries and harmonize it with the best international and European practices. That process would lead to better evidence bases in order to reach this objective.

The programme defined 4 main results to achieve:

Result 1: Improved production and dissemination of good quality statistics;

Result 2: Increased level of harmonisation of methodologies between EaP countries, and with the EU;

Result 3: Strengthened institutional capacity of the NSIs of the region relying on the principles set out in the European Statistical Code of Practice;

Result 4: Enhanced evidence-based policy-making, allowing that statistical evidence substantiates policy choices, though improved cooperation and coordination between the National Statistical Institutes, policy-makers and line institutions.

THEMATIC AND TRANSVERSAL SECTORS

The programme will provide support in **5 thematic sectors:** Macroeconomic statistics, Social statistics, Transport and energy statistics, Agriculture statistics, Business statistics, and **3 transversal sectors:** SDGs, Gender, Governance.

THE CONSORTIUM

The strong partnership between the Consortium members under the lead of Expertise France will ensure a consistent and valuable implementation of the programme. Moreover, most Consortium members are also active in the ENP-East region through national cooperation activities and have developed solid and trustworthy connections with the beneficiary institutions.

THE EUROPEAN UNION HELPS ARMENIA CARRY OUT A TIME USE SURVEY

On 6-7 February 2020, in Yerevan, EU experts met their peers from Armenia's statistical institute, Armstat, and UN Women to discuss the first steps towards a time use survey in Armenia. A time use survey gives important information on the division of labour between men and women. Who is doing most work at home? Who spends most time with the children? A time use survey is also important to quantify the amount of unpaid labour in an economy.

The meeting in Yerevan was a part of a larger EU-funded programme: Statistics Through Eastern Partnership (STEP). With STEP, the European Union supports the Eastern Partnership countries, including Armenia, to build up a better evidence base to support the countries in making decisions based on facts.

The European Union and UN Women will support Armstat in carrying out a time use survey over the next 12-18 months. The survey will start with a pilot survey and the full survey will last 12 months to pick up seasonal variations such as agricultural work and vacation over the year.

Statistics Through Eastern Partnership (STEP) is an EU-funded regional cooperation programme in statistics. It is being implemented in the six Eastern Partnership countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. More information: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/european-neighbourhood-policy/enp-east/step>



STUDY VISIT TO INSEE IN PARIS

In December 2019, a group of labour force statisticians and IT professionals visited INSEE, the French National Statistical Institute to study modern tools used to collect data for statistical purposes. The programme included 13 sessions involving 17 different experts coming both from INSEE and other representatives of the French national statistical system. The total of 18 presentations from the INSEE colleagues gave the participants useful insight into how data can be collected through the internet and what to be aware of in order to use it successfully. Collecting data through the internet is cheaper once the software has been developed and the staff trained in its use. Also, French colleagues gave useful tips on how to increase response rates by giving incentives to the people interviewed.

COVID-19 AND STEP

The corona virus has swept from China to Europe and is spreading even further. As this is being written, most EU countries are in lock-down and only essential activities are permitted. All STEP workshops, trainings and study visits have been cancelled until the end of April and possibly even longer. However, STEP continues to operate and is working on ways to continue its activities. Some planned technical assistance activities will be carried out online through exchange of

emails and video conference facilities. STEP is also planning online training in different forms. The training course Communication4Statisticians (C4S) will be launched soon with a large online training part. Another form is the virtual groups. Virtual groups are groups with members from the EU member states and from the STEP partner countries. The groups will do a mix of presentations and discussions. Specifically, a virtual group on the coordination of the national statistical systems is under preparation. Virtual groups have a big element of interaction among the participants. STEP is also looking into digitalising more traditional classroom training by recording the training sessions and making them available together with exercises and tests.

THE STEP TEAM

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