



**Strategy of  
Arab Statistics Initiative "Arabstat"**

**Secretariat of the Steering Committee**

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## **Background**

Statistics and economic indicators are considered to be one of the main pillars for economic decision making process. The success of any economic program or developmental project depends largely on the accuracy and quality of statistical data provided by statistical agencies. Many countries have realized the importance of providing credible and comprehensive data for better planning and reliable economic, financial and social forecasts.

The process of production and timely dissemination of high quality data requires great effort of cooperation among all the concerned institutions and standardization of statistical methodologies according to the best international practice.

In this context, a high-level conference on “Macroeconomic and Financial Statistics for Evidence-Based Policy Making” was held on 14th May 2012 in Rabat (Morocco). The conference served as a forum to discuss issues related to the modernization of macroeconomic and financial statistics and regional corporation in the Arab region. During the conference, progress on statistical capacity in the region were reviewed and major challenges inhibiting the modernization and development of macroeconomic and financial statistics were also identified.

The conference ended with a call for cooperation between the AMF and the IMF to pave the way for the creation of Arab Statistics Initiative “Arabstat”. The Conference recommended the organization of technical meeting to be held in the following months to allow the participants to discuss the roadmap of “Arabstat”, including the ways of technical assistance delivery, areas of focus and administrative arrangements.

The Arabstat was officially launched by the Council of Arab Finance Ministers in its meeting held in Dubai (UAE) in April 2013. The Arab Monetary Fund (AMF) was assigned the role of secretariat of the Initiative’s Steering Committee. The purpose of Arabstat is to enhance cooperation among statistical institutions in the Arab countries, improve their statistical systems by preparing economic, financial and social statistics based on the latest methodologies and statistical manuals and guidelines, and help in capacity building.

## **Mission**

The mission of Arabstat is to assist Arab countries to strengthen, improve and adapt their statistical systems so as to produce timely, relevant, comprehensive, and reliable economic and financial data in the macroeconomic management area, and to develop their institutional capacities, in collaboration, whenever possible, with other regional and international institutions involved in the area. The mission also involves the promotion and harmonization of statistics among Arab countries through the use of internationally accepted statistical methodologies, concepts, definitions, manuals, and classifications.

## **Objectives**

In 2016, the Arab Monetary Fund (AMF) has prepared a questionnaire to explore the statistical needs of Arab countries in order to design and implement effective mechanisms within the framework of “Arabstat”. The results of questionnaire showed that there is a need in most Arab countries to implement the international standards and methodologies in various areas such as National Accounts, Monetary statistics, Government Finance Statistics, and Balance of Payments Statistics. Moreover, the questionnaire pointed out that only five Arab countries are subscribed into the E-GDDS. In view of these needs, The “Arabstat” strategy aims to achieve the following objectives:

- Help to develop systems and strengthen statistical capacity in the Arab countries to enable them to provide reliable statistical data in a timely manner.
- Work on the development of statistical Arab environment, and encourage studies and statistical research activities in the Arab countries.
- Providing statistical data and indicators in the framework of regional Arab standardized methodologies which are in line with the recognized international methodologies and practices.
- Promote cooperation, coordination and exchange of experiences among the concerned authorities in charge of statistical data in the Arab countries.
- Encourage partnerships with regional and international institutions related to statistical areas.
- Encourage the use of standardized concepts, methodologies and definitions. In this context, the IMF’s Enhanced General Data Dissemination Standard (E-GDDS), and the Data Quality Assessment Framework as well as other

established frameworks for economic and financial statistics will be valuable tools of reference.

- Help to develop and upgrade conceptual and methodological frameworks to underpin data collection and compilation of statistics to international standards.
- Create a regional database aimed at building a stronger community of practice in the field of statistics among countries as well as improve access to existing ones.

## **Actions**

Implementation tools to achieve the above mentioned objectives will be as following:

- Understand the Arab countries based on their conformity with the best international practices related to the statistical methodologies adopted. Some Arab countries apply the most recent statistical methodologies, while other countries seek to improve their capacities.
- Proposing a road map based on a five-year plan, addressing the needs of the Arab countries.
- Cooperate with regional and international institutions to provide training and technical assistance in order to develop institutional capacity building in the areas of National Accounts, Balance of Payments, Government Finance Statistics, and Economic and Financial Reforms.
- Forming specialized teams, from Arab countries, in the most important statistical areas (economic, monetary, financial, and demographic) to assess the needs of Arab countries and to provide the necessary training support and technical assistance. These teams will develop a framework to initiate the change mechanism and to follow up the transition to the most recent guidelines and statistical methodologies. In addition, they will prepare action plans according to a certain timetable along with a report of achievements which shall be discussed in the annual meetings of the steering committee.
- Benefiting from successful experiences in Arab countries that have achieved progress in applying best international standards in the field of statistics.
- Exchange expertise with regional and international institutions.

- Conducting training courses, which would contribute to the development of institutional capacity building in the Arab countries.
- Organize conferences and seminars specialized in some statistical areas such as the informal sector, regional statistics, gender statistics, etc.
- Develop an action plan to implement the enhanced Statistical Data Dissemination System (e-GDDS).
- Develop an economic, financial and social statistical database in order to become a major source of information for all Arab countries.