



STEP

Statistics
Through
Eastern
Partnership

NEWS

STATISTICS THROUGH EASTERN PARTNERSHIP NEWSLETTER



STEP expert with colleagues from The Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia for the onsite TA mission on energy statistics.

STATISTICS THROUGH EASTERN PARTNERSHIP (STEP) ENTERS ITS FINAL PHASE

Since the last edition of the newsletter, it is with both shock and sadness that we follow the military aggression by Russia against our partner country Ukraine and the dramatic events taking place there. We would like to extend our support and solidarity to both colleagues and their families in Ukraine. At the same time, we commend our Ukrainian colleagues who continue to work and participate in our online activities despite the extremely difficult circumstances. In a related development, the European Commission has suspended cooperation activities with Belarus. Belarus had in any case withdrawn from participating in the STEP programme already in January 2022, following its suspension of participation in the Eastern Partnership last summer.

Despite the difficult events in the region, STEP in its capacity, continues to be

implemented, mostly online. STEP is now in its final stage of implementation with 64 regional activities completed and only 10 regional activities left. Since the start in 2019, STEP has completed 64 trainings, workshops and study visits, as well as a pilot time use survey in Armenia and a pilot Labour Force Survey in Azerbaijan. The programme's regional activities have evolved, thus becoming more and more interactive, where the participants exchange best practices among themselves and with the EU Member State experts. With STEP now extended to 31 July 2022, the principal focus will be on providing the bilateral technical assistance and completing the remaining regional activities.

STEP technical assistance will mainly be online interventions of around 2-3 days. The topics dealt with are priority areas highlighted by the partner countries themselves as well as topics which emerged from previous STEP activities (workshops, training etc.). One onsite mission (the first in almost two years) was successfully carried out with the Statistical Committee of the Republic

of Armenia in Yerevan with a short-term expert at the beginning of February 2022, to support the development of final energy consumption statistics and energy efficient indicators (see photo). The initial feedback from the technical assistance activities has been very positive. In general, the partner countries have been very proactive in order to get the most out of the 2-3 online sessions allocated to each activity. The format allows the countries to present very specific issues such as calculating the final energy consumption of electric and hybrid cars. The bilateral technical assistance missions will continue throughout spring. Around 30 technical assistance activities are foreseen to be carried out in the framework of STEP.

The preparations for the final event have also started. The final event is planned to take place online on 30 June 2022. The date and further details will be confirmed in the coming weeks.

Keep an eye on our Twitter profile (@EU_STEP) and check the STEP website (www.eu-step.eu) to stay updated about all STEP activities!

STEP'S IMPACT IN PARTNER COUNTRIES: STATE STATISTICAL COMMITTEE OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN SHARES THEIR THOUGHTS ON STEP (PART 3)

This edition of the Newsletter rounds up our interviews with partner countries. We spoke with Ms Elnura Isgandarova and Mr Nemat Khuduzade from the State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan about the actual changes in their NSI's work as a result of STEP.

The STEP National Coordinators (NCs), one from each of the five partner countries, are crucial for the implementation of STEP. They are the main link between the five ENP national statistical institutes, Eurostat and the STEP programme team within the contractor, Expertise France. Their role includes efficient communication with the STEP programme team, communication with other producers of statistics in their countries, supporting the implementation of activities, as well as monitoring and reporting on the programme at national level.

Ms Elnura Isgandarova highlighted that STEP is an important project for the State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan (SSC). Everybody in SSC is aware of STEP and the implemented activities. The participants gain valuable knowledge from EU Member States and the other STEP countries. This knowledge is applied in the daily work, making statistics better for users.



"STEP is different from bilateral support. You get the regional perspective. Not only the experiences from one EU Member State, but also the experiences from the other STEP countries. This has been really valuable for SSC."

Ms Elnura Isgandarova, International coordinator

Mr Nemat Khuduzade, head of the labour market statistics division, said that the support from STEP has been particularly valuable in the field of labour market statistics.



Mr Nemat Khuduzade, head of the labour market statistics division

The SSC had not received international support in this field for over 15 years. STEP has funded a pilot labour force survey (LFS) where the questionnaire has been updated with the newest recommendations from the International Labour Organisation (ILO). This not only improves the quality of labour market statistics, but also the National Accounts benefit from the improved data. The improved labour market statistics also feed

into improved Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) as it is now possible to publish data on young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET).

The online format has had both positive and negative sides. It has been positive for the staff in SSC who can participate in more activities as there are no extra costs related to their participation. On the other hand, not everyone has the technical equipment such as cameras and microphones to fully take advantage of the online format and participate actively in the discussions. It can also be difficult to concentrate on an online activity if you are at home with other family members or in the office with colleagues around.

The STEP programme would like to thank Ms Isgandarova and Mr Khuduzade for their valuable contributions to the successful implementation of STEP.



THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM IS MORE THAN JUST THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL INSTITUTE

"The National Statistical Institutes coordinate the statistical activities of all other national authorities that develop, produce and disseminate European statistics",¹ according to the European Statistics Code of Practice, which is the cornerstone of the quality framework and sets the standards for developing, producing and disseminating European statistics.

The national statistical systems in the STEP partner countries have endured a lack of adequate coordination. Generally, the NSIs have limited established authority over other producers of official statistics.

STEP has addressed the important issue of coordination through a virtual group, a workshop, a study visit and several technical assistance activities. The activities have given the STEP partner countries an insight into how appropriate provisions in the law on official statistics and memoranda of understanding are working in EU Member States and how this could be developed in the STEP partner countries. The latter was the particular focus of the virtual group on coordination of the national statistical system, where the partner countries were paired with an EU Member State in drafting a roadmap to overcome the obstacles on coordination for an effective functioning of the national statistical system. Each country drafted a roadmap together with other producers of official statistics, such as the central bank or other ministries and agencies. The EU Member State experts from Denmark, France, Hungary, Italy and Lithuania went through the roadmaps and gave practical advice on how to actually implement them.

(1) Indicator 1bis.1 in the European Statistics Code of Practice p. 5. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/4031688/8971242/KS-02-18-142-EN-N.pdf/e7f85f07-91db-4312-8118-f729c75878c7?t=1528447068000>

PILOT TIME USE SURVEY IN ARMENIA

A time use survey (TUS) is the main statistical tool to measure how men and women use their time. It highlights the unequal distribution of unpaid work between women and men. Another important contribution of a TUS is that it gives a complete picture of a society by providing detailed information about how people spend their daily 24 hours on different economic and non-economic activities. The TUS also contributes to other sectors of official statistics, e.g. national accounts as the 2008 SNA framework includes unpaid work in the general production boundary. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) focus on unpaid work as a way to promote gender equality.

A time use survey is one of the most complicated household surveys a national statistical institute undertakes since for example it is difficult to code the respondents' activities. A person can do several things at the same time, such as working on the train while travelling to work or look after children while carrying

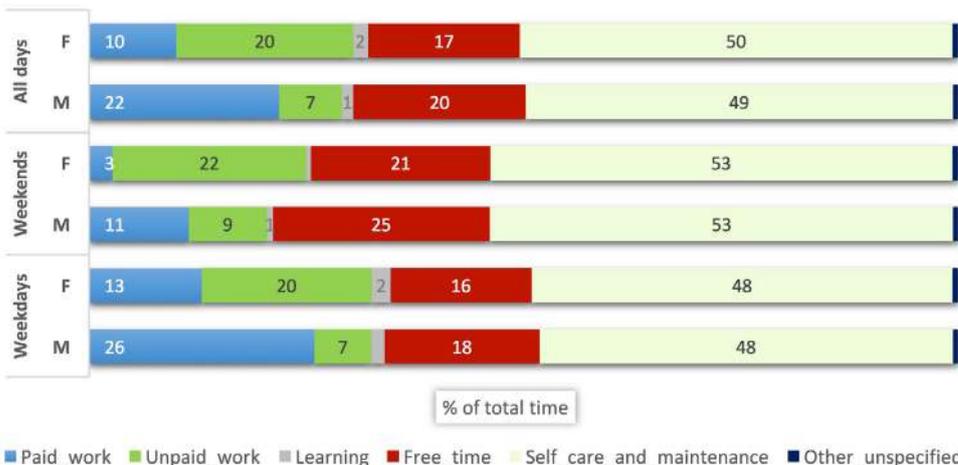
out other domestic work. Respondents are asked to report their use of time in 15-minute intervals for one weekday and one weekend day in the survey diary. This sampling of diary days and weeks also complicates the survey.

Nevertheless, the Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia endeavoured to undertake a pilot TUS through support from STEP and in collaboration with UN Women. The pilot TUS was conducted with several aims: testing survey tools, including development of survey questionnaires; introducing new classifications and sampling strategies, new data collection methods and fieldwork logistics etc. The support from STEP was on survey methodology, sampling and IT issues.

The initial sample size of the pilot TUS totalled to 300 household/dwelling units in 30 enumeration areas of which 45.7% household/dwelling units (137) were interviewed. Diary days and weeks were selected in accordance with the HETUS 2018 Guidelines. A total of 336 individuals in the 137 household/dwelling units were interviewed and 82.7% (278) of them filled in at least one diary (weekday and/or weekend day). Actually, 553 valid diary responses were achieved (four diaries per household).

This is a pilot survey with data collection over the span of one month rather than the recommended year in the HETUS guidelines. However, some results already stand out, for example, the unequal amount of time men and women spend on unpaid work. On weekdays, women spent 20 per cent of their time on unpaid work whereas men only spend 7 per cent on unpaid work.

Don't forget that we are on Twitter. You can follow our activities on @EU_STEP and on our website www.eu-step.eu



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