# Modernisation of European Enterprise and Trade Statistics, MEETS Programme 2009-2013

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The Commission presented its fourth and last report on the implementation of a Programme for the Modernisation of European Enterprise and Trade Statistics (MEETS).

Three reports have been published, covering the annual work programmes 2009 and 2010, 2011 and 2012. This report gives a final assessment of the implementation of the MEETS programme.

**Level of participation and financing**: the report notes that by the end of 2013, most projects had been finalised and most deliverables submitted. Over the period 2009-2013, the MEETS programme provided funding worth **EUR 42.5 million** to support development within several business and trade-related areas of statistics. The level of implementation of MEETS operational credits during that period was 87%.

Collaborative networks in the European Statistical System Networks (ESSnets), were a major means of implementing the objectives of the programme. In all, 23 out of 32 ESS members took part in at least one MEETS-financed ESSnet over the five years of the programme. Funding was also provided for individual grant agreements concluded with National Statistical Institutes (NSIs), and for some external studies carried out by contractors. By the end of 2013, 28 out of 32 members of the ESS had taken part in at least one of the individual grants of the MEETS programme.

**Implementation of objectives**: the MEETS programme was structured to achieve the following four main objectives, each of which included several projects:

***(1) Reviewing priorities and develop target sets of indicators for new areas*:**

- In 2009, an external study was commissioned to evaluate the legal acts in statistical areas that were identified as needing revision.
- In 2010, the ESS Committee adopted a new strategy-driven approach. Areas of lesser importance in business and trade statistics were identified during the annual strategic review of Eurostat's priorities. Consequently, the action 'Identifying areas of lesser importance' was removed from the scope of the MEETS programme. The 2010 review resulted in the MEETS programme being streamlined, and several actions were merged.
- Following the streamlining of MEETS, further methodological work and the organisation of a pilot data collection were taken over by the 'ESSnet on profiling of large and complex multinational enterprise groups' as well as the 'ESSnet on measuring global value chains'.
- The joint Entrepreneurship Indicator Programme (EIP) was developed in cooperation with the OECD to underpin policies related to entrepreneurship with indicators describing the areas of 'access to finance', 'R&D', 'innovation and technology', 'capabilities/skills' and 'culture for entrepreneurship'.
- The inclusion of mandatory indicators for high-growth innovative enterprises in the legal framework of employer business demography is currently under development.

**(2) Achieving a streamlined framework of business-related statistics**:

- The ESSnet proposed revised draft definitions of the statistical units 'enterprise', 'enterprises group', 'kind-of-activity unit' and 'local kind-of-activity unit' together with operational rules and a data model to enforce a uniform implementation.
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Other results of this ESSnet are recommendations for a method to classify statistical units applied in a comparable manner over all statistical domains, and comparable breakdowns as well as a methodology for a frame population in business statistics.

- The aim of the EuroGroups Register (EGR) was to provide consistent, coordinated survey frames for producing quality statistics measuring globalisation, mainly for Foreign Affiliates Statistics and Foreign Direct Investments. In 2009, the ESSnet on EGR methodology set up EGR version 1.0 as well as the organisational network for data exchange between Eurostat and ESS members.
- The ESSnet on profiling of large and complex multinational enterprise groups developed a methodology and guidelines.
- Lastly, some methodologies for EU sampling schemes were developed for selected business statistics domains such as space-related activities including e.g. space transport, structural business statistics for enterprises with 250-499 employees, outward Foreign Affiliates Statistics, ICT investment and expenditure and culture statistics.

***(3) Supporting the implementation of a more efficient method of producing enterprise and trade statistics****:*

- The work on 'data warehousing and data linking in the production of business statistics' was carried out by an ESSnet set up in 2010.
- In 2013, ESS members developed and compiled an extended set of indicators based on trade and business micro data.
- Based on the results of these actions, the 'ESSnet on measuring global value chains' was set up in 2011. The ESSnet further developed and implemented a redesigned survey on international sourcing followed by micro-data linking exercises with existing statistical data (structural business statistics, foreign trade, foreign affiliates statistics).
- The project 'linking data from ICT usage, innovation, structural business statistics and business registers' was conducted from 2011 to 2013.
- The 'ESSnet on the use of administrative and accounts data' was launched in 2009 and investigated practical issues regarding use of these data for business statistics purposes.

***(4) Modernising Intrastat***: work focused on the harmonisation of methods to improve quality under a simplified Intrastat, the improvement and simplification of intra-EU trade statistics and the better use of administrative data — VAT (Value Added Tax) and VIES (Value Added Tax Information Exchange).

**Conclusions**: the benefits of the MEETS programme for the Union, Member States, providers and users of related statistics are **difficult to quantify**, as returns on investments will only materialise gradually over time. Without the MEETS programme, some Member States would have invested budget in the modernisation of business and trade statistics in an **uncoordinated way**. This would have produced results that would not have been comparable to those in other EU Member States, making aggregation to European aggregates problematic.

In the framework of the programmes, some new, more cost-effective data collection systems (by linking existing data and alternative ways of collecting data other than traditional surveys) were tested in a number of Member States with the aim of creating models applicable for all.

Lastly, as direct follow-up to the MEETS programme, Eurostat has launched a fundamental revision and integration of business-related statistics via a **common legal framework** for collecting, compiling, transmitting and disseminating statistics on the economic activities of the business sector, FRIBS.

As part of FRIBS, Eurostat's aim is to **reform Intrastat** by means of the so-called international trade package or Single Market Statistics (SIMSTAT). Special attention will be given to smaller EU Member States. This tackles the simplification of Intrastat and the quality of related statistical data.