

Regional Workshops and Webinars

Climate Change and Gender Equality

Fiscal Reforms to Support Addressing Climate Change Challenges in Algeria (14 May)

Fiscal policy instruments are powerful tools that governments can deploy to respond to climate change challenges. This webinar was based on the IMF [Selected Issues Paper](#) discussing the Algerian government's climate strategy and presented fiscal policy options to achieve Algeria's greenhouse gas emission reduction goals and build resilience against climate risks.

The webinar was attended by 84 participants. The presentation was followed by a lively Q&A session. The METAC team gives special thanks to the presenter, Mr. Mahmoud Harb from the IMF for taking the extra time to respond to all questions and engaging in the vivid discussion with the audience. Many questions focused on the proposed reform of the universal energy subsidy, which was one of the four presented reform pillars. Participants were especially interested in the reforms' impact on household's purchasing power, inflation, and investments in renewable energy. The debate covered topics such as (1) the need to cushion the social impact of an energy subsidy removal by an accompanying targeted cash transfer mechanism that supports vulnerable households; (2) the necessity of adequate monetary policy to respond to the supply shock; and (3) the impact of universal subsidies on the commercial viability of investments in renewables.

Budget Institutions for Effective Climate Change Action and Gender Equality in the Middle East and North Africa (9-12 June | Cairo, Egypt)

How well prepared are the budget institutions in MENA countries for implementing gender and climate reforms? And how can the budget process be adjusted to effectively incorporate gender and climate policy priorities? These were some of the questions that a regional workshop on Budget Institutions for Effective Climate Change Action and Gender Equality tried to answer. The event was jointly organized by METAC and the Fiscal Affairs Department ([FAD](#)) with the support of the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs ([SECO](#)). The workshop included country presentations and group exercises which evoked lively discussions among the participants. Peer exchanges played a crucial role in enhancing understanding and sharing experiences and knowledge among participants.

Empowering Women for Economic Growth (12 September)

Gender equality is a powerful engine for economic growth and resilience. This webinar introduced METAC's event series on Gender Economics and provided a regional overview of key gender gaps and trends among METAC's member countries. Drawing on recent IMF research, it reviewed evidence highlighting the impact of gender inequality on the macroeconomy and the potential economic gains from closing gender gaps. The introductory webinar was attended by 91 participants who expressed interest in a diverse range of gender issues during the Q&A session. Participants were particularly interested in fiscal issues, such as gender-responsive budgeting and the impact of fiscal policies on women.

Climate Risk, Green Finance and Policy Options for the Financial Sector in the Middle East and Central Asia (24 September)

The financial sectors in the Middle East and Central Asia should play an important role in supporting the region's climate policies. This webinar evaluated the impact of climate change on banking institutions in

the region. It discussed the size and nature of regional financing needs for adaptation and mitigation as well as opportunities and challenges for the development of green finance. The webinar was attended by 140 participants who actively engaged with the presenter, Jerome Vacher from the IMF's Middle East and Central Asia Department, in the Q&A session. Mr. Vacher explained how the IMF can assist countries with improving the market environment for green finance and highlighted the importance of data availability and quality for considering climate risks in bank's portfolios.

The Growth Potential of Closing Labor Market Gaps and Increasing Women's Participation in Iraq (1 October)

The MENA region has the potential to convert demographic challenges into opportunities for economic expansion by leveraging its labor force. With one of the lowest rates of female labor force participation and notable skills gaps, implementing labor and education reforms to boost women's role in the economy can significantly advance private sector development and economic output. This webinar was based on the case of Iraq, highlighting imbalances in Iraq's labor market, drivers of informality, and impediments to women's participation and mobility. The presenters quantified the growth benefits of closing gaps vis-à-vis peer countries and outline key policy priorities. The presenters, Gazi Shbaikat and Ghadeer Noufal, answered participants' questions about the drivers of informalities, legal obstacles for female labor force participation in Iraq, and what the government can do to make jobs in the private sector more attractive for women.

Boosting Female Employment Opportunities in Jordan (16 October)

Despite high levels of education, female labor force participation in Jordan has been historically low and unemployment high. This webinar discussed structural and legal impediments that contribute to gender disparities in Jordan's labor market participation. It highlighted labor market and regulatory characteristics in Jordan and outlined key reform priorities. The 56 webinar participants had a vivid discussion with the presenter, Rayah Al-Farah from the IMF Middle East and Central Asia Department, during the Q&A session, discussing how a conducive regulatory environment, and the provision of childcare and transportation could incentivize higher female labor market participation in Jordan. The Q&A session also elaborated on how remote jobs, flexible work arrangements, quotas, or the removal of structural and legal impediments could spur female employment.

Experiences in Gender Budgeting: A Cross-Country Perspective (6 November)

Gender budgeting signals a government's commitment to advancing gender equality and promotes efficient resource use. This webinar was jointly hosted with the Africa Training Institute (ATI) and South Asia Regional Training and Technical Assistance Center (SARTTAC) to discuss country experiences with gender budgeting in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and the Middle East. The topic raised significant interest with almost 300 participants attending the event, including about 50 from the MENA region. Ms. Lauren Keating, resident advisor at AFRITAC East, presented an overview of Gender Budgeting practices in Sub-Saharan Africa and shed light on challenges and success factors behind advancing these practices. Dr. Saroj Adhikari from the Ministry of Women and Child Development in India outlined the Government of India's steps to promote gender equality and women empowerment. Representing the Ministry of Finance and Economy of Morocco, Ms. Leila Majal and Mr. Ousama Gidar highlighted the initiation and development of gender-responsive budgeting in Morocco, and specifically the "Center of

Excellence for Gender Responsive Budgeting” as a key player in mainstreaming gender budgeting practices through the provision of training, support, and tools.

Fossil Fuel Subsidies in the Middle East and Central Asia (26 November)

Despite their negative environmental, fiscal, and distributional impacts, many countries continue to provide fossil fuel subsidies by holding prices below true cost. While the conceptual case for fossil fuel subsidy removal is very clear, governments often face challenges to take on such reforms in practice. This webinar was organized in partnership with the [Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action](#) and provided insights into the IMF methodology for measuring subsidies, highlighting trends from the [2023 update of the IMF fossil fuel subsidies database](#), as well as key considerations when designing reform based on recent country experiences. The webinar was attended by 77 participants who engaged in lively a discussion on reform challenges with the presenters, Alpa Shah and Nate Vernon-Lin from the IMF Fiscal Affairs Department. Questions focused specifically on subsidy removal policies in the regional context and examples of mitigating the impact of fossil fuel subsidy removal by increasing targeted cash transfers and improving social protection systems for the poor.

Gendered Taxes: The Interaction of Tax Policy with Gender Equality (14 January)

Policymakers have a large toolkit at their disposal to promote gender equality and support inclusive growth. The webinar provided an overview of the relationship between tax policy and gender equality, covering labor, capital and wealth, and consumption taxes. It illustrated the impact of tax progressivity on pay gaps and female labor supply. While focused on gender issues, many of the findings apply to other disadvantaged groups. The webinar further provided policymakers with an overview of relevant tax issues and pointed to generally advisable policies. During the Q&A session, webinar participants inquired about corporate taxation, informality, and gender bias in the taxation of sectors with a high female employment share. The presenter, Maria Coelho from the IMF Fiscal Affairs Department, introduced the IMF’s recently issued Tax and Benefit Analysis Tool ([TaxFit](#)), a microsimulation model that analyzes the burden and generosity of tax and benefit systems for households and gender-focused indicators of policy-induced (dis)incentives to formal work.

Bridging Gaps through Evidence-Based Policies: A Deep Dive into Gender Inequality and Macroeconomic Outcomes (27-29 January | Cairo, Egypt)

The workshop was organized in collaboration the IMF’s Strategy, Policy and Review Department and offered an in-depth exploration of macro-critical gender gaps and their influence on economic outcomes, including demographics, technology, and conflict. It examined how unequal access to education, infrastructure, and financial services, employment, and leadership opportunities affect growth, stability, and resilience. The course also covered the legal, policy, and institutional barriers that perpetuate inequalities. Participants were encouraged to present their own research and country experiences, to promote collaborative learning and exchange. Hands-on sessions provided tools and techniques for identifying macro-critical gender gaps and evaluating the macro-economic consequences of gender inequality. Thirty participants from 13 countries (nine METAC member countries) attended the workshop. The event received very good feedback and benefitted from the participant’s lively engagement and enriching discussions. Participants also provided suggestions for further in-depth training on the topic, such as in-depth coverage of country success stories and extended guidance on the tools and underlying methodologies.

Policies to Foster Green FDI: Best Practices for Emerging Market and Developing Economies (8 April)

This webinar discussed how foreign direct investment (FDI) can play a key role in emerging market and developing economies' ability to finance green projects amid low fiscal space and financially constrained domestic investors. Combining econometric evidence with country case studies, Gregor Schwerhoff from the IMF Research Department explored whether climate policies can help attract FDI in green projects and how other domestic policies and global factors affect these flows. The presentation was followed by a highly engaged Q&A session in which webinar participants discussed green financing methods, best practices in renewable energy taxation, and obstacles in attracting green FDI.

Frayed Societies: Decoding the Interplay between Conflicts and Gender Inequality (29 April)

As women's empowerment is vital to economic growth, the associations between conflicts and gender inequality provide a long-lasting drag on economic performance following those episodes. In the Q&A session, participants engaged presenters Paola Ganum and Can Sever from the IMF with questions on the impact of conflict on education and the two-way causality between political violence and gender inequality. Participants examined how conflicts influence changes in legislation and how conflict-related increases in gender inequality contribute to worse economic performance and GDP losses. The discussion underscored the multifaceted challenges posed by conflicts and the critical need for targeted policy interventions.

Central Bank Operations

CEF Course on Monetary Policy Implementation Tools (20-24 October | Kuwait)

METAC and the IMF Monetary and Capital Markets Department (MCM) provided a course at CEF-Kuwait on monetary policy implementation tools. Course participants learned how to use advanced techniques to forecast domestic liquidity and autonomous factors in a central bank and were introduced to central bank balance sheets stress testing. The delivery mode was hybrid, with hands-on workshops during the liquidity forecasting sessions. This allowed participants to utilize models with various degrees of complexity, while the mission team provided technical guidance on operationalizing these models.

Financial Supervision and Regulation

Bank Corporate Governance and Board Effectiveness (27-30 May | Kuwait)

The workshop was organized in collaboration with the IMF Center for Economics and Finance (CEF) in Kuwait to train participants on bank corporate governance and discuss related implementation challenges. The event was attended by 33 participants from 12 countries: Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Yemen. It described the key principles and concepts of good governance, presented the role of board of directors and board committees, and explained the interdependencies of risk management, compliance, and internal audit in fostering a good governance infrastructure. Fit and propriety criteria of board members and key senior management were presented. Such criteria aim to ensure that bank executives possess adequate expertise, knowledge, and independence to conduct their functions effectively. Case studies trained participants on how to assess the effectiveness of corporate governance, identify weaknesses, and propose corrective measures. IMF experts presented sessions on Corporate Governance in Islamic Banks, Related Parties Exposures, and State-Owned Banks.

Regulatory and Supervisory Frameworks for Fintech and Cyber Resilience: Balancing Innovation and Security (17-21 February | Dubai, UAE)

The workshop explored the intersection of Fintech innovation and cybersecurity regulation, opportunities, and risks in the digital transformation of financial services, as well as the impact of innovations in blockchain, artificial intelligence, and cloud computing on Fintech and cyber resilience. It emphasized practical regulatory and supervisory approaches through case studies and group exercises, integrating regional perspectives and international cooperation frameworks, with focus on challenges from BigTech, e-money, open banking, decentralized finance, and cyber threats.

Implementing Effective Regulation and Supervision of Climate-related Financial Risks

(7-10 April | Riyadh, Saudi Arabia)

The workshop provided an overview of the Basel Committee for Banking Supervision's Principles on climate risk supervision and regulation and presented strategic approaches for improving supervisory frameworks and prudential regulation of climate-related financial risks. Participants also engaged in practical discussions on climate scenario analysis and risk management practices in the supervisory context. Prominent speakers from the Bank of England, the Central Bank of Brazil, and the IMF shared insights on the Basel Committee's evolving agenda and advice on developing climate risk regulation and supervision frameworks and enhancing supervisory management practices.

Government Finance Statistics (GFS) and Public Sector Debt Statistics (PSDS)

Strengthening Government Finance Statistics and Public Sector Debt Statistics (19-23 May | Amman, Jordan)

Led by Mr. Imad Khanchaoui (IMF Statistics Department) and METAC Advisor Mr. Amir Hadziomeragic, this workshop covered key concepts of the Government Finance Statistics (GFS) Manual 2014 and the and Public Sector Debt Statistics (PSDS) Guide for Compilers and Users 2011 through presentations and case studies. 25 participants from 10 countries (Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, West Bank and Gaza, and Yemen) learned current GFS and PSDS practices, covering data collection, compilation methods, capacities, and dissemination standards in participating countries. It was the first of its kind in years and is expected to strengthen GFS/PSDS practices across the region and pave the way for future technical assistance.

Peer-to-Peer Workshop: The Experience with Macro Forecasting and Policy Analysis in Middle Eastern and North African Central Banks (14-15 October | Jordan)

In collaboration with IMF HQ and under the patronage of the Central Bank of Jordan, METAC organized a peer-to-peer workshop on Forecasting and Policy Analysis System (FPAS) practices in the region. Early FPAS adopters from Jordan, Algeria, Morocco, and Egypt, as well as Lebanon and Saudi Arabia as observers, convened to promote knowledge sharing and best practices related to FPAS frameworks. The workshop aimed to spur regional cooperation and laid the foundation for future technical collaboration and the establishment of a community of practice. The workshop was the first of its kind in the region. Follow-up events are planned in the coming year.

Government Finance Statistics (1-5 December | Kuwait)

This course at the IMF Middle East Center for Economics and Finance (CEF) supported authorities in their efforts to improve the compilation and dissemination of Government Finance Statistics (GFS). The in-person event was delivered by METAC GFS/PSDS Advisor Mr. Amir Hadziomeragic and Mr. Imad Khanchaoui from the IMF's Statistics Department. 27 officials from 13 countries participated, 12 of which were from METAC member countries. The lecturers provided an overview of the Government Finance Statistics Manual (GFSM) 2014 covering key concepts and understanding of the GFSM framework, classification and characteristics of revenues, expenses, nonfinancial and financial assets and liabilities, functional classification, and consolidation. In addition, participants worked in groups on six case studies, allowing them to familiarize themselves with the practical application. The course was well received with a very high evaluation score. Participants were motivated to discuss experiences and challenges in their countries. For many participants it was the first training opportunity in GFS, showcasing the effective cooperation between METAC and CEF.

Compilation of GFS for State-Owned Enterprises (April | Kuwait)

A one-week workshop at the IMF's Middle East Center for Economics and Finance (CEF) (SOE) focused on measuring fiscal positions of SOEs and related exposure for budgets through the linkages between SOEs accounting source data and creation of GFS statistics, which would enable to better assessment of fiscal risks. The workshop emphasized the practical GFS compilation by deriving integrated stocks and flows for SOEs, utilizing a designed tool based on case studies, and facilitated peer-to-peer knowledge exchange.

Macroeconomic Frameworks

CEF Course – Macroeconomic Forecasting and Analysis (23 September – 4 October | Kuwait)

In collaboration with IMF HQ and the CEF, METAC participated virtually in a CEF course on Macroeconomic Forecasting and Analysis, presented by the Institute for Capacity Development jointly with Bank Al-Maghrib. The course helped practitioners and central bankers to conduct econometric analysis and construct reliable forecasts by incorporating machine learning methods which have become popular for forecasting by revealing hidden trends from large data pools. Utilizing machine learning methods can enhance the quality of forecasting at the level of central bank and ministries.

Macroeconomic Management in Resource Rich Countries (28 April-1 May | Kuwait)

The course at the IMF's Middle East Center for Economics and Finance (CEF) provided a comprehensive overview of monetary policy regimes, monetary transmission mechanisms, and the role of monetary policy in macroeconomic stabilization, with a special emphasis on the GCC region. Macroeconomic Frameworks advisor Nasser Badra discussed monetary policy frameworks, including exchange rate arrangements, exchange rate targeting, inflation targeting, and hybrid (managed) cases with examples from various countries. Central Bank Operations advisor Stefaan Ide explained the role monetary policy implementation under the GCC monetary policy frameworks. The workshop included hands on sessions and workshops aimed at applying theoretical concepts empirically.

Real Sector Statistics

CEF Course – Measurement of the Non-Observed Economy (16-19 September | Kuwait)

METAC delivered this course in collaboration with the IMF's Middle East Center for Economics and Finance (CEF) to 33 representatives from national statistical offices, central banks, and government ministries, training them on developing and improving the methods for measuring the non-observed economy (NOE) in line with international standards and best practices. The workshop helped participants to have a better understanding of the NOE types, methods, and data sources as well as its crucial role to ensure exhaustiveness of the GDP estimates.

Workshop on Quarterly National Accounts

(4-9 April | Virtual)

METAC and the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics (AITRS) conducted a three-day virtual regional workshop on quarterly national accounts. The workshop was delivered by Mr. Issam Alsammak (METAC) and Mr. Omar Hakouz, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN-ESCWA) statistics resident advisor at Jordan's Department of Statistics. AITRS provided administrative and logistical support for this workshop. The workshop was attended by 48 participants from 13 countries, mainly national accounts compilers from National Statistical Offices.

Revenue Administration

Reusable IT Solutions for Digital Tax Administrations in FCS countries (30 November- 3 December | Cairo, Egypt)

Modern IT systems are crucial for data collection and transparency, although transitioning to these systems can be challenging, especially in fragile and conflict-affected states (FCS). To tackle these challenges, the IMF Fiscal Affairs Department (FAD) and METAC hosted a workshop with participants from Iraq, Libya, and Yemen on modernizing tax systems in fragile and conflict-affected states. Key topics included the evaluation of current tax systems and digitalization stages, as well as potential pathways for digitalization, such as acquiring a commercial Integrated Tax Administration System. The Kontaktu platform was emphasized for its capabilities in data collection and analysis and discussions explored the possibility of creating a roadmap for its deployment.

Tax-Customs Cooperation in METAC Countries (14-17 April | Riyadh, Saudi Arabia)

The four-day workshop, bringing together 20 officials from 10 METAC countries, aimed to foster collaboration between tax and customs administrations, share good practices, and enhance the effectiveness of tax and customs cooperation in the region. It provided international good practices on the legal framework for data exchange, types of data exchanged to enhance compliance risk management and mitigate the risks, and other forms of cooperation, such as joint audits. It further discussed challenges and opportunities in tax and customs management, shared successful strategies and experiences, and identified areas for collaboration between the two administrations, highlighting the advantages of such cooperation.

Tax Policy

Strengthening Tax Policy in the MENA Region (2-3 December | Cairo, Egypt)

Ten countries participated in the regional workshop hosted by METAC and the IMF Fiscal Affairs Department (FAD). The program covered several tax policy topics, including strategies to improve tax capacity, the design and evaluation of tax incentives, the implications of the minimum corporate tax for the

region, the role of tax policy units, and the interaction of tax policy with gender equality. Interactive sessions fostered peer learning and facilitated the direct exchange of insights from countries' experiences. The discussions explored reform options to improve tax policies and mobilize revenue given prevailing constraints.

Public Debt Management

Public Debt Management (2-3 December | Cairo, Egypt)

The high-level regional workshop, organized in collaboration with the IMF's Monetary and Capital Markets Department (MCM), aimed at exploring key debt management challenges and CD needs in METAC member countries. Its structure constituted the first edition of a compact debt management training course that combines economic conditions, new developments, and practical training for debt managers. The training was attended by 28 participants from 11 METAC member countries and two GCC-countries. The [workshop](#) included sound practice examples and shared international experience on debt management oversight, coordination of debt and monetary policies, new types of government instruments and new developments such as digitalization and the use of artificial intelligence.

Public Financial Management

Macro-fiscal Planning (9-13 June | Kuwait)

PFM Advisor Yasser Sobhi led a five-day course at CEF in Kuwait, bringing together 33 participants from 13 countries (8 METAC, 4 GCC, and Somalia). Officials from ministries of finance and economy and central banks enhanced their understanding of policymaking and management processes and institutions over short to medium timeframes. During lectures, applied workshops, interactive roundtable discussions, and peer-to-peer learning, the course covered selected issues in economic policymaking, macroeconomic policy formation, and crisis resolution. Participants' active interactions and comments revealed a high demand for such tailored trainings targeting officials working in the policymaking sphere.

Cash Management Course (9-12 December | Kuwait)

In close collaboration with the CEF, METAC delivered a four-day course aimed at improving the cash flow forecasting function in ministries of finance. The training was provided to 30 participants from ministries of finance and central banks from 14 countries, with practical exercises on using different methodologies and coordinating cash and debt management through the design of a cash buffer. The course concluded with participants developing draft cash management reform plans in line with their respective country context.

Anti-Money Laundering And Combating The Financing Of Terrorism (AML/CFT) *Co-hosted by METAC and financed by the AML/CFT Trust Fund*

CEF Course – Best Practices to Enhance the Effectiveness of Combating the Financing of Terrorism Frameworks (22-26 September | Kuwait)

The AML/CFT Regional Advisor contributed to an IMF Legal Department workshop on Best Practices to Enhance the Effectiveness of Combatting the Financing of Terrorism (CFT) frameworks in Kuwait City, Kuwait. The workshop presentations and case studies discussed (1) improving the understanding of terrorist financing risk; (2) the role of the private sector in detecting and disrupting terrorist financing activities; (3) the production and use of terrorist financing financial intelligence to counter terrorism and

terrorist financing; (4) investigating, prosecuting, and sanctioning terrorist financiers; (5) terrorism-related targeted financial sanctions; and (6) international cooperation in combating the financing of terrorism. 33 representatives from central banks, financial intelligence units, AML/CFT supervisors, ministries of finance, anti-corruption agencies, and law enforcement authorities attended the workshop.

Outreach Activities

Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force (MENAFATF) meetings (19-23 May | Manama, Bahrain)

The Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force (MENAFATF) Secretariat granted the IMF an award for its 2023 contributions in support of its members. AML/CFT regional advisor Peter El Sharoni participated in the discussions of the Mutual Evaluation Report of Iraq and provided an overview of the IMF Legal Department's AML/ CFT capacity development work in the MENA region. The meetings were an opportunity to inform member countries of the planned CD activities in the region, including the upcoming workshop at the IMF Center for Economics and Finance (CEF) on "Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Good Practices to Enhance Effectiveness" in September 2024. The Plenary was also a chance to coordinate with the MENAFATF and other Technical Assistance providers, such as the World Bank and the UNODC, on CD activities in the MENA region.

IMF-METAC Steering Committee Meeting 2024 (6 June | Cairo, Egypt)

For almost 20 years, the Middle East Regional Technical Assistance Center has been assisting its member countries in advancing public policies and building stronger macroeconomic institutions for long-term development and inclusive growth. METAC's Steering Committee met on June 6, 2024, in Cairo, Egypt, to review the Center's [capacity development \(CD\)](#) activities for the past fiscal year and discuss the workplan for the period ahead. The event brought together representatives from the IMF, member countries, and [development partners](#). Switzerland, Germany, the Netherlands, France, and the European Union provide financial and strategic support to the Center.

METAC had a very successful year. It delivered on its commitment to substantially expand CD services to its member countries, despite a challenging regional environment marked by fragility and conflict. Total CD delivery increased by 30 percent compared to the previous year, while CD to fragile member states rose by 40 percent. METAC added three new [workstreams](#) (tax policy, government finance statistics, and macroeconomic frameworks) to its existing portfolio. It also established two new cross-cutting work programs on [climate](#) and [gender](#) and bolstered its team of experts with three regional advisors dedicated to assisting [fragile and conflict-affected states](#) with their specific institutional challenges and capacity building needs. In the coming year, METAC will further increase its CD delivery to member countries by introducing two new workstreams on [public debt management](#) and [governance & anti-corruption](#).

Sustaining Partnerships: GIZ Lebanon (12 July | Beirut, Lebanon)

METAC Director Holger Floerkemeier and METAC Economist Anastasia Janzer attended the German International Cooperation (GIZ) reception for GIZ's new Country Director in Lebanon, Mr. Matthias Wagner. We wish Mr. Wagner and the GIZ team all the best for their successful work in Lebanon!

IMF-CEF/AMF – Environmental and Climate Change Statistics Workshop (11-22 November | United Arab Emirates)

METAC economist Anastasia Janzer virtually presented METAC's Climate Change Capacity Development initiatives at a regional workshop organized by the IMF Statistics Department, the IMF-Middle East Center for Economics and Finance (CEF) and the Arab Monetary Fund (AMF). The presentation (1) discussed why climate change is considered a critical macroeconomic policy challenge; (2) gave a broad overview of the IMF's Engagement on climate change; and (3) presented METAC's CD delivery and engagement on climate issues. The workshop hosted 20 participants from the ministries of finance and economic development, central banks, and statistical offices of 12 countries from the Arab region.

Eleventh Meeting of the Steering Committee of the Arab Statistics Initiative (ARABSTAT) (13-14 November | United Arab Emirates)

At the invitation of the Arab Monetary Fund (AMF), Ms. Elirjeta Pepaj, Real Sector statistics advisor and Mr. Amir Hadziomeragic, Government Finance Statistics and Public Sector Debt Statistics Advisor attended the eleventh meeting of the ARABSTAT's Steering Committee. They contributed two presentations. Ms. Pepaj presented on utilizing administrative data for compiling national accounts, drawing from regional experiences, while Mr. Hadziomeragic elaborated on new initiatives related to the public sector debt statistics and its application in debt analysis. Participants acknowledged METAC's essential role in providing statistical CD, including its training programs with CEF in Kuwait, where METAC plans to contribute further in 2025.

Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force (16-21 November | Riyadh, Saudi Arabia)

AML/CFT Regional Advisor Peter El Sharoni participated in the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force (MENAFATF) plenary and related working groups' meeting. Mr. El Sharoni participated in the discussion of the Mutual Evaluation Report of Djibouti in the Mutual Evaluation Working Group (MEWG) meeting and informed member countries in the plenary session about implemented and planned CD activities. Mr. Sharoni also served as a panelist in a conference on [The Latest Developments in the Field of Combating Money Laundering, Financing of Terrorism and the Proliferation of Weapons](#) held on November 19 on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the group. The panel included a representative of the Financial Action Task Force Secretariat, the MENAFATF MEWG co-chair, and representatives from Qatar and Saudi Arabia. Mr. El Sharoni's contribution focused on the IMF Financial Integrity Divisions' experience under the current round of AML/CFT mutual evaluations and how the Legal Department's Technical Assistance supports countries preparing for their assessments.

METAC Interim Steering Committee Meeting (5 December | Cairo, Egypt)

METAC held an interim Steering Committee (SC) meeting on December 5 in Cairo, Egypt, in conjunction with METAC's 20th anniversary conference. The meeting updated the SC members about METAC's upcoming Phase V mid-term evaluation, an important part of METAC's accountability framework. Mr. Floerkemeier explained the evaluation objectives and process, the status of preparations, and the envisaged timeline. The meeting further discussed METAC's funding status and presented two thematic sessions related to METAC's capacity development (CD) work: (1) IMF Innovations in Digitalizing Tax Administration and (2) Fiscal Risks of Public-Private Partnerships.

Newspaper Ahram interviews METAC director (5 December | Cairo, Egypt)

The Egyptian newspaper Al Ahram interviewed METAC Director Holger Floerkemeier on the occasion of METAC's 20th Anniversary celebrations in Cairo. Mr. Floerkemeier highlighted Egypt's role in the Center's

capacity development initiatives, explained METAC's CD engagement in Egypt and the region, as well as the role of international partners. Read the full interview [here](#).

2025 IMF/World Bank Spring Meetings (21-26 April | Washington, DC)

METAC director Holger Floerkemeier had the opportunity to meet with METAC member country delegations, learn about CD priorities, and coordinate plans with IMF CD departments and country teams. A noteworthy event during the Spring Meetings was a [high-level roundtable for Syria](#), which provided crucial orientation on METAC's planned re-engagement. Syria's central bank governor and finance minister attended the spring meetings, representing the country at this forum for the first time in more than 20 years. There was broad recognition of the urgent challenges facing the Syrian economy and a collective commitment to support the authorities' efforts for recovery and development. METAC is currently in discussions with development partners to prepare for future CD and ensure close coordination with its partners and other Technical Assistance providers.

First High-Level Dialogue on the IMF-Saudi Arabia CD Partnership (9 April | Riyadh, Saudi Arabia)

The first High-Level Strategic Dialogue on Capacity Development between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Finance and the IMF provided the opportunity to discuss CD priorities, update on CD activities under the partnership agreement, and agree on resource allocations in the period ahead. The Saudi authorities welcomed the strategic discussion of joint priorities and emphasized the importance of scaling up CD support to the region—Syria in particular, and Fragile and Conflict-Affected States (FCS) more generally. The event, marking the start of the second year of the IMF's 10-year partnership with the Ministry of Finance, positions the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as one of the IMF's major global CD partners.