PASII - ECOBUSAF and SOCSTAF newsletter

n°2 – August 2024

Editorial

This is the second edition of the ECOBUSAF and SOCSTAF newsletter.

ECOBUSAF and SOCSTAF are two components of the Pan-African Statistics Programme II (PAS II) funded by the EU, which has entrusted its implementation to European statistical institutes (Denmark, Spain, Finland, France, Norway and Poland) working in consortia. These components aim at supporting African integration through the reinforcement of national, regional and continental statistical systems by developing social statistics (SOCSTAF) and economic and business statistics (ECOBUSAF) in national statistical offices (NSOs) of the African union countries.

After a somewhat slow start and the first two years spent launching activities, establishing connections with African NSOs and organizing initial activities that were presented in the first issue of the newsletter, the projects have been accelerating in all areas since the beginning of 2024. These activities demonstrate the progress made but also outline development paths and pave the way for new activities until the end of the ECOBUSAF and SOCSTAF projects in October 2025.

This second edition of the newsletter is aimed at informing about what is going on and keep in touch with partners and relevant stakeholders in the statistical sphere. The multiple activities show that the project involves an increasing number of AU countries and that collaborations are being organized with other partners in statistical cooperation in Africa, both within the European PASII program and outside it with institutions such as Statafric, UNECA, and the ILO.

This new edition features a diverse range of activities, including a hackathon on adapting African agriculture to climate change, a multi-country study visit on setting up a statistical business register, missions on administrative data in South Africa, the establishment of a new statistical dissemination database in Rwanda, developing the statistical business register in Mauritius and the modernization of national accounts in Madagascar, the development of multi-topic cooperation between Statistics Finland and National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in Nigeria, and workshops on tourism satellite accounts.

Training activities have not been neglected, and this newsletter reflects the interest they garner from all AU countries.

Besides featuring activities and events, this edition provides maps showing which countries have been part of the project, lists of performed activities and a list of the upcoming activities and online trainings.

In case you have questions or comments, do not hesitate in reaching out to the coordinators! Enjoy your reading!

Administrative data is high on the agenda in South Africa!

Comprehensive discussions on how to use administrative data to leverage a digitized production of official statistics took place in Pretoria in February 2024.

A mission from Statistics Denmark was the occasion for meetings between statisticians from Statistics South Africa, Statistics Denmark and several national key stakeholders. United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) also participated in the mission and shared their insights on the work they have done on the continent especially experiences and learnings on use of administrative data.

The dialogue and discussions showed that Statistics South Africa is well-positioned to establish an integrated statistical system using administrative microdata, thanks to its role as the country's statistical coordination body and the increased use of national IDs in administrative systems in South Africa.

The discussions and meetings were a common starting point for increased cooperation on administrative microdata within the South African national statistical system.

The recommendation from the experts is to start with a small national pilot project with two or three stakeholders to test integrating their administrative data systems using a common unique ID. The goal is to show the benefits of sharing and linking microdata within the National Statistical System. Statistics South Africa are now working to identify stakeholders who will form part of the pilot project.

Training Workshop On The Use Of Administrative Data And New Data Sources Held At NBS Nigeria From 4 To 7 February 2024

A training workshop on utilizing administrative data and new data sources was held at the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in Nigeria from February 4-7, 2024 in collaboration with Statistics Finland.

The workshop focused on harnessing administrative data, experimental statistics, and effective data ecosystems. Presentations and practical sessions covered topics like machine learning operations (MLOps) and enhancing data understanding among users.

Fifteen NBS experts participated, finding the workshop "educative, informative, and apt" with valuable insights for future improvements. The attendees emphasized the need for innovative approaches in collecting administrative statistics data, leveraging technology like big data and web scraping. Future cooperation suggestions included more practical sessions, such as machine learning training, for enhanced capacity building.

Study Visit on Statistical Business Register – 21st to 24th of May 2024 - Oslo

Statistics Norway hosted a study visit on Statistical Business Register (SBR) under the ECOBUSAF component. It was attended by nine representatives of the statistical offices involved in the SBR component, Statistics Mauritius, Namibia Statistics Agency (NSA) and the National Agency for Statistics and Demography of Senegal (ANSD). This activity includes individual support to the three countries and joint activities in the form of workshops or study visits. This is the second joint session within this component, but the first where all participants are meeting each other face to face. In addition, SBR experts from Statistics Denmark, Statistics Finland and Statistics Norway (SSB) participated in-person with varying length of time during the whole study visit.

The main objective of the study visit was to give the participants from Statistics Mauritius, NSA and ANSD an insight in the Norwegian SBR system and how it works. Various topics related to the Norwegian SBR were presented and discussed, in everything from use of administrative data sources, collaboration with data owners, activity coding, cooperation between statistical domains and SBR, to business surveys. Presentations were also given by data owners from the Register of Legal Entities, Norwegian Population Register and Norwegian Address Register. Statistics Finland gave a presentation on how the SBR is built in Finland, and SSB gave a presentation of Statbus. Both presentations showing that building a well-functioning SBR is a time-consuming, laborious and continuous process. The study visit, organized on participative way, also featured presentations from Statistics Mauritius, NSA and ANSD on their SBR, and exchange on their practices in open discussions on topics and issues emerging from the presentations. Some challenges can be said to be more country specific, but several challenges apply to all the three African NSO's and are useful to discuss.

Since the start of the collaboration, several joint sessions between the countries have been planned, in order to benefit from synergies and from the exchange of experience between participants. Being able to sit next to each other gave a different level of discussions and interaction between the participants and contributed to a successful study visit. This is also repeated in the feedback received from the participants after the study visit. The next joint physical study visit is already planned to take place in November 2024, hosted by Statistics Mauritius.

Developing the Statistics Mauritius Statistical Business Register (SBR)

Experts from Statistics Finland have carried out a follow-up mission to Statistics Mauritius on Statistical business register in February 2024. It focused on EU Best Practices for statistical production of Short-Term business Statistics (STS) and Structural Business Statistics (SBS). Key concepts and indicators were introduced for Business Demography, STS and SBS statistical production. These were compared to available data sources in the Statistics Mauritius SBR to identify possible new indicators that Statistics Mauritius could start producing.

How response burden is measured in Statistics Finland was presented and how it could be carried out in Statistics Mauritius was discussed.

An open cooperative dialogue prevailed throughout the Activity between all participants. This resulted in an effective working environment to carry out all Agenda items.
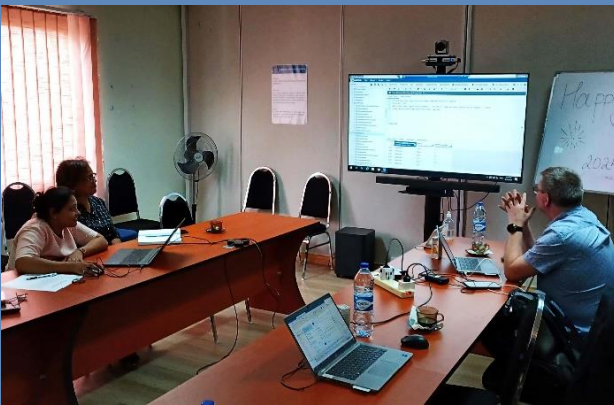
Tourism satellite accounts in the spotlight at two virtual workshops – February 2024

Insee has hosted in February 2024 two online workshops on tourism satellite accounts: one for Francophone and one for Anglophone countries. These workshops were co-organized with Statistics Norway and Statistics Denmark.

A total of 70 statisticians from 23 African Union countries as well as representatives from Statafric and Afristat took part in one of these workshops.

The method used to compile the tourism satellite account, the sources used, the main tables in the account and potential difficulties were presented. Eight participating countries also shared their experiences. In conclusion, Statafric underlined the crucial importance of implementing a tourism satellite account and stressed the need to adapt its construction to the African context. This issue, among others, will be addressed at an onsite workshop to be held in October in Tunis. This workshop is aimed at countries that already have experience in building TSA.

A part of the audience of the Workshop for Francophone countries

New Statistical Database in Rwanda coming up

In May 2024, two experts from Statistics Denmark went to Kigali to support the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda in setting up a new statistical dissemination database for official statistics in Rwanda.

This new database will revolutionize data accessibility, empowering users to delve into detailed data cubes, effortlessly export results, and even automate data for further statistical endeavors, all aimed at providing the public with easier access to comprehensive statistics about Rwanda.

During the mission, the team worked on installing a Px-Web system, which will host the statistical database. The experts conducted a comprehensive course on data creation, updating, and metadata streamlining, laying the foundation for seamless operation.

The database is very promising and have potential to reshape the statistical landscape of Rwanda.

The tentative results of the cooperation can be seen on: http://pxweb.statistics.gov.rw/pxweb/en/

Hackathon "exposure of African agriculture to climate change"

- And the winners are …

The jury for the "Exposure of African Agriculture to Climate Change" hackathon, which met on 16 April, announced the teams from the National Statistical Institutes of Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire to be the winners.

INSEE and in particular its innovation unit (SSP Lab) organized a hackathon with the contribution of experts from Statistics Poland, Statistics Finland and Statistics Norway, members of the ECOBUSAF and SOCSTAF consortia, as well as of the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, the Issea (Yaoundé) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. The exercise was based on data from the 2019 agricultural census carried out by Benin's Directorate of Agricultural Statistics.

Ten teams from national statistics institutes of the African Union participated in the competition held on April 8 and 9, working on a current topic: 'Exposure of African Agriculture to Climate Change.' The countries represented were: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon (two teams: one from the National Institute of Statistics, the other from the Ministry of Agriculture), Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Nigeria, Namibia, Somalia, and Togo. A mentoring process, particularly involving experts from Statistics Poland and the Agricultural Statistics Directorate of Benin, was organized during the event to address participants' technical questions.

The aim of the hackathon was to raise awareness among experts from the African Union's NSIs of the use of new data sources, whether administrative data or private sources.

At the end of the competition, the jury met on April 16 and declared the teams from Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire National Institutes of Statistics the winners of the hackathon. These two teams stood out for the quality of their work: original presentation of results, use of external sources, innovation, modeling, and more. They will be invited to a study visit at Insee, where they will be introduced to the work of Insee and the statistical services of the ministries on new data sources and their processing. They will also have the opportunity to present the solutions proposed during the hackathon and discuss their implementation.
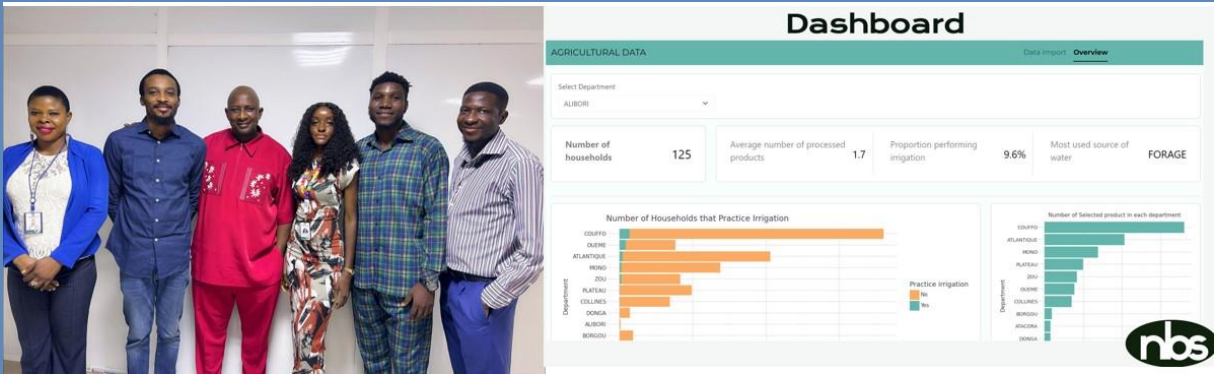
Nigeria team: from left to right, Sandra Ben-Ezea, Omokhomion Emmanuel, Bishop Ohioma, Elizabeth Olarewaju, Lucky Ogidan and Moses Waniko ; the solution proposed by Nigeria team
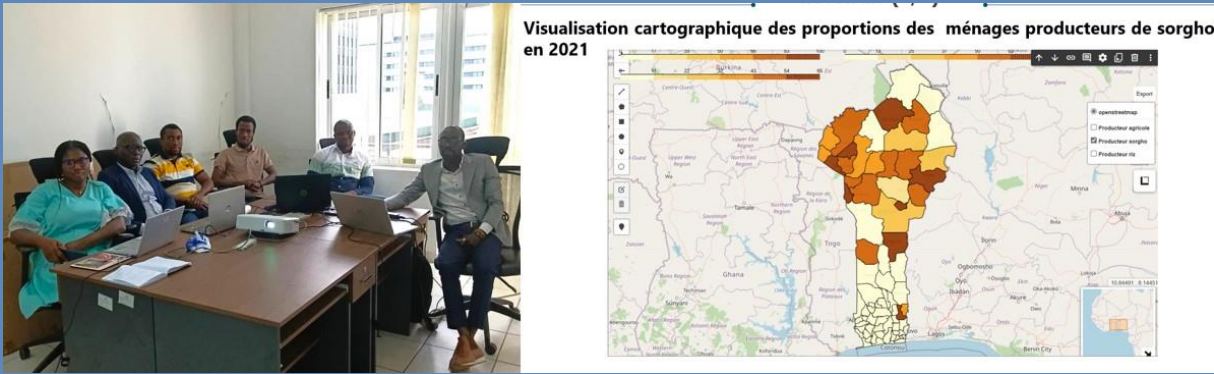
Ivory Coast team: from left to right, Ehou M'Boya Koto, Koto Mathias Doueu, Obou Wilfried Sibahi, Abdoulaye Bakayoko, Abdoul Karim Camara et Kô Fié Didier Kraet ; an illustration of their proposal

The jury: from left to right and top to bottom, Olivier Biau, Dominique Francoz and Romain Lesur (Insee), Henri Luomaranta (Statistics Finland), Issoufou Seidou (Uneca), Thérèse Uwimana (NISR Rwanda), Eric Wansouwe (ISSEA Yaoundé) and Serge Aballo (INS Bénin)

Modernization of national accounts in Madagascar: first mission for the implementation of the 2008 SNA and the deployment of the ERETES tool

An expert in national accounting and the ERETES software from Insee and an expert in national accounting from Afristat conducted a joint mission at INSTAT Madagascar in Antananarivo from March 4 to 8, 2024. The mission, received by the Director General of INSTAT and his collaborators, had the primary objective of evaluating the national accounts production system of Madagascar with a view to changing the base year, migrating to the 2008 SNA, and implementing the ERETES software. Additionally, the mission aimed to identify the needs for technical assistance and training in the ERETES module.

An "Aide-memoire" was drafted at the end of the mission. It includes, among other things, the development of a strategy document and an action plan for the renovation of Madagascar's national accounts, which includes mobilizing the necessary sources for account preparation (conducting specific surveys, mobilizing administrative data), training staff on the updates of the 2008 SNA and the ERETES tool, and organizing a national workshop to raise awareness among partners and data source providers.

Insee and Afristat plan to conduct a second mission to INSTAT Madagascar to introduce accounting staff to the updates of the 2008 SNA and the ERETES software.

This assistance will take place within a broader framework of support for the modernization of national accounts in Madagascar and needs to be coordinated with that of other stakeholders (including the World Bank).


Harouna Traore from Insee (first from the left) and Ibrahima Sory from Afristat (second from the left) with the INSTAT national accountants' team.

PAS II ECOBUSAF and SOCSTAF activities presented at the European Conference on Quality in Official Statistics (Q2024) in Estoril in June 2024

A reflection on the benefits of the grant modality for implementing cooperation projects was presented at this international event. Also, the importance of building partnership for effective cooperation was highlighted.

The 11th European Conference on Quality in Official Statistics (Q2024) was organized in Estoril from 4 to 7 June 2024. It gathered statisticians, academics, and external stakeholders to foster the dissemination of knowledge and research on emerging issues related to quality in official statistics.

Taking the opportunity of such important event for official statistics, the members of the consortium for ECOBUSAF and SOCSTAF grants presented a paper titled "Peer learning in Africa: a partnership for statistical capacity building" where they reflected on the use of the grant modality to implement a European Commission statistical cooperation programme. In general, the paper analyses the added value of this modality in comparison to other funding modalities, and mentions some of the advantages that have been identified so far.
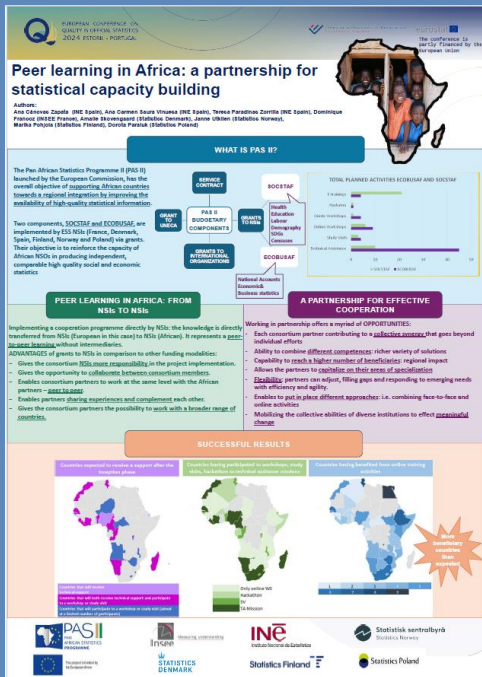
This article also reflects on the benefits of building partnerships for effective cooperation. In this sense, the consortium established for implementing these two grants brings to the project important synergies that leverage the impact of the activities. Internal and external coordination are key elements of this project and it is also analysed in this paper.

During the Q2024, members of INE Spain in representation of the consortium presented a poster containing the main elements of the paper. A good number of participants of the conference were interested to know more about this project and the relevant information was shared with them. It was also a good opportunity to distribute an information leaflet presenting the ECOBUSAF and SOCSTAF projects.

Ana Canovas and Ana Carmen Saura (INE-Spain)

Ana Carmen Saura, Ana Canovas, (INE-Spain) and Dominique Francoz (INSEE-France)

Trainings

From the beginning of 2024, the National Statistics Institute of Spain (INE Spain) has implemented 3 online training activities in the framework of the Pan-African Statistics Programme II (PAS II) within the SOCSTAF component: an online course on Demographic Indicators, one training on Education Statistics and one on Health Statistics.

Due to our strong commitment to continuous improvement and high quality, we take students feedback on our courses very seriously and work to implement constant up-gradings. In this line, a very positive and remarkable step forward in 2024 that has been highly valued by students is the inclusion of didactic material in three different languages (including French) and simultaneous interpretation of live webinars into French, allowing participants to choose whether to follow the masterclasses in English or French.

2024 online courses have been perfect occasions to share with the African experts the INE working experience. These courses constitute a good way to continue creating efficient networks and partnerships which are a key challenge for INE and for Consortium members towards the transformation and progress in Africa.

The results obtained through the course satisfaction surveys have been very positive. In this respect, in 2024 editions 90% percent of participants are satisfied o very satisfied with the courses and 92 % think that it will help them for their current and future works. Despite the good results, INE Spain encourages towards a more active participation and motivation of students.

The course exceeded my expectations in terms of content quality, organization, and support from the instructors. Each module contributed significantly to my learning and professional development in the area"

"I would like to thank the entire team involved in preparing and executing the course for their professionalism and dedication. This certificate not only represents a personal achievement, but also reflects the excellent work you have done"

"I look forward to applying the knowledge acquired and continuing to grow in my career thanks to the solid foundation provided by this course. Once again, thank you for this enriching experience"

Very significant dissemination efforts have made to present the project at international conferences and meetings with the African continent. Specifically, this year the PAS II project was presented at the European Conference on Quality in Official Statistics (Q2024) that has taken place in Estoril in June 2024.

In general, all these activities constitute an important advancement supporting African integration through strengthening the African Statistical System, to ensure the use of quality statistical data in the Africa Integration decision-making process.

INE Spain will continue fostering the participation in coming training courses. To this end, a good coordination, communication, and visibility of the project are key factors for its success.

Countries that have participated in our activities until June 2024
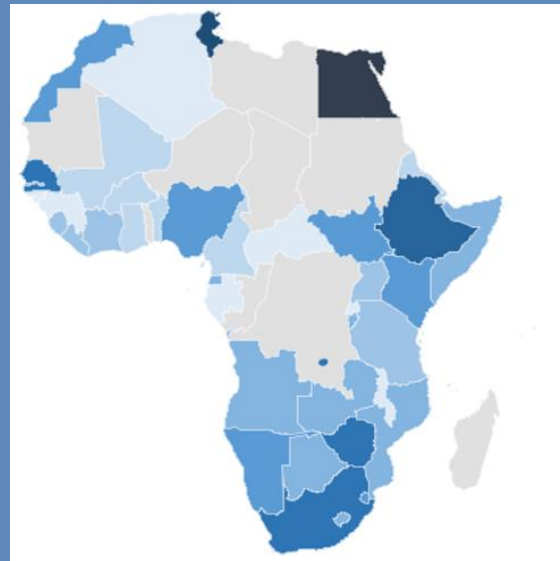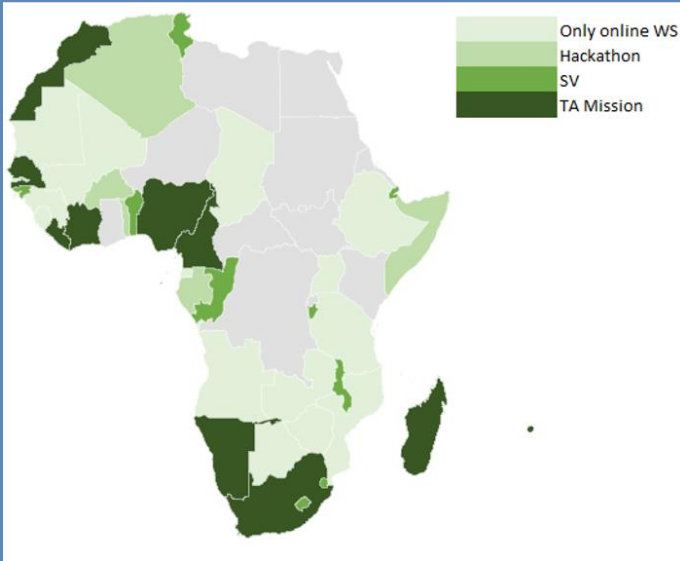
Number of online trainings attended

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | |
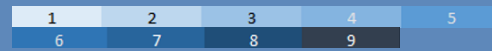
List of activities performed by component:

Implementing member	Grant	Component	Country	Type of activity	Content	Date (month)
Insee	ECOBUSAF	I-B-2C	24 countries	Workshop	Tourism satellite accounts	February 2024
STATISTICS DENMARK	SOCSTAF	D1	South Africa	TA Mission	Administrative data	February 2024
Statistics Finland	ECOBUSAF	II-A1a	Mauritius	TA Mission	Developing Statistical Business Register (SBR)	February 2024
Statistics Finland	SOCSTAF	D1-D2	Nigeria	Workshop	Use of Administrative Data And New Data Sources	February 2024
Insee	ECOBUSAF	I-A-1A	Liberia	TA mission	SNA2008 implementation	March 2024
Insee	ECOBUSAF	I-A3	Madagascar	TA mission	Assessment mission	March 2024
Insee	ECOBUSAF	I-A3	Tunisia	TA mission	ERETES implementation	March 2024
Insee	SOCSTAF	D2	17 countries	Preparatory WS	Hackathon preparation	March 2024
Insee	SOCSTAF	D2	10 countries	Hackathon	Hackathon	April 2024
Insee	ECOBUSAF	I-A-2B	Cameroun	TA mission	Balance sheets and financial accounts	May 2024
STATISTICS DENMARK	SOCSTAF	E	Rwanda	TA Mission	PX-web installation and use	May 2024
Statistisk sentralbyrå Statistics Norway	ECOBUSAF	II-A	Mauritius, Senegal and Namibia	Study visit	Statistical Business Register	May 2024

Insee — Measuring, understanding

STATISTICS DENMARK

Statistisk sentralbyrå
Statistics Norway

Statistics Finland

INE — Instituto Nacional de Estadística

Statistics Poland

The PAS programme is funded by the European Union

INE-Spain: Online trainings carried out in 2024:

PASII component	Year	Subject
SOCSTAF	2024	Demographic indicators – 3rd edition
	2024	Health statistics – 2nd edition
	2024	Education statistics – 2nd edition

Next multi-country activities:

Date	Component	Organizing EU partners	Activity
27th September	ECOBUSAF	Statistics Norway	Joint online session on SBR (Statistics Mauritius, ANSD, NSA)
8-10 October 2024	ECOBUSAF	INSEE	Onsite workshop on tourism satellite accounts (Tunis)
15-17 October 2024	SOCSTAF	Statistics Poland, INSEE	Onsite WS on population and housing census (Tunis)
November 2024	ECOBUSAF	INSEE	New ERETES version dissemination workshop
November 2024	SOCSTAF	Statistics Denmark	Multi-country Study Visit on Communication and Dissemination
December 2024	ECOBUSAF	INSEE	ERETES Training for trainers

Next online trainings

Date	Component	Subject
12-13 November	ECOBUSAF	Management of the National Business Register and uses for Business Demography Statistics
28 October-10 November 2024	SOCSTAF	SDG indicators for 2030 Agenda

The SOCSTAF and ECOBUSAF European team during the Madrid coordination meeting (March 2024): first row from left to right: Janne Utkilen (Statistics Norway), Dominique Francoz (INSEE-France), Ana Carmen Saura (INE-Spain), Valerie Mathey (INSEE-France), Ana Slawinska (Statistics Poland)
Second row, from left to right: Dorota Paraluk (Statistics Poland), Ana Canovas (INE-Spain), Amalie Skovengaard (Statistics Denmark), Teresa Paradinas (INE-Spain), Marika Pohjola (Statistics Finland)