

IMF Working Paper

April 18, 2006

Subject: **Providing Official Statistics for the Common Market and Monetary Union in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Countries—A Case for “Gulfstat”**

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CORRIGENDUM

The following corrections to WP/06/38 (February 2006) have been provided by the staff:

Page 28, Table A.1, column 6, last 3 rows and Sources: revised.

Page 29, new reference inserted after fourth reference:

read “BP Statistical Review of World Energy, June 2005, pg. 20, available on the web at <http://www.bp.com/sectiongenericarticle.do?categoryId=9003066&contentId=700590>”

Pages 30 and 31: corrected for overflow of text.

Corrected pages are attached.

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were, or became, key aspects of this. However, both agencies' mandates go far beyond the support of monetary union and serve to foster economic integration.

Against the background of this experience, a regional statistical agency could serve the GCC countries well in their endeavor to move towards a common market and monetary union. A GCC regional statistical agency could combine elements from both Eurostat and Afristat as outlined in the previous section. With the GCC national statistical offices still evolving, the need for developing common methodology for collecting and processing certain data is of overriding importance, along with a program of data dissemination. In building Gulfstat, its potential role as compiler of statistics should be given special consideration. Contrary to Eurostat, which evolved in the midst of fully developed national statistical agencies, Gulfstat would be part of the process of building strong national statistical agencies. Efficiency gains in centralizing some data collection activities could well be realized in this way.

One of Gulfstat's initial tasks could be coordination of the collection of price statistics for the International Comparison Program (ICP). All GCC countries participate in the program, and it adopts a common methodology in data collection. A case may be put forward for a central agency, Gulfstat, to undertake this task. Another, equally important area is adoption of national accounts methodology (*1993 SNA*), which requires a unified implementation approach. A third case is the construction of export and import indices and treatment of intra-GCC trade statistics (exports and re-exports). Finally, a key dimension to GCC cooperation is capacity building, where Gulfstat could be given responsibility for organizing training for statisticians in the region. This would appear to be a cost-effective approach for creating national expertise and creating a coherent and consistent environment for statistical work in the GCC countries.

In setting up a new regional statistical agency, a number of more specialized issues are to be considered. These are, particularly, the appropriate governance structure, including the legal framework; modalities of financing a regional statistical agency; and the linkages to the national statistical agencies. Given the relatively large number of national statistical agencies, some streamlining of institutional frameworks may also be considered. Special provisions may be needed for national statistical agencies that are part of national ministries.

Table A.1. Gulf Cooperation Council States—Selected Economic Indicators

	Real GDP Growth Annual Change, in percent		Consumer Price Index		Oil	Gas	Population
	1998-2002 Average	2005	1998-2002 Average	2005	Proven reserves in billion barrels	Proven reserves in trillion cubic meters	2004 (In millions)
Bahrain	4.8	7.1	-0.8	3.7	0.1	0.1	.72
Kuwait	0.8	3.2	1.5	1.8	99.0	1.6	2.61
Oman	3.6	3.8	0.3	1.9	5.6	1.0	2.53
Qatar	7.4	5.5	1.8	3.0	15.2	25.8	.78
Saudi Arabia	1.5	6.0	-0.5	1.0	262.7	6.8	23.95
UAE	4.0	7.5	2.2	6.0	97.8	6.1	4.28

Sources:
The BP Statistical Review of World Energy, June 2005; “Middle East and Central Asia Regional Economic Outlook,” September 2005 (Washington: International Monetary Fund); and *International Financial Statistics*, December 2005.

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