

## Distance-learning training course on “Introduction to STATA”

The Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP) conducted a distance-learning training course on 21, 24 and 25 August 2009 for seven countries: six in the region (Bangladesh, China, Lao, Mongolia, the Philippines and Vanuatu) and Ghana with assistance from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). This training course was organised jointly by SIAP, JICA and respective NSOs of these seven countries.

This distance-learning training course on “Introduction to STATA” was a complementary or preparatory training for the Fifth Group Training Course in Modules on Fundamental Official Statistics (Module Course) which is scheduled to be conducted jointly by SIAP and JICA from 5 October 2009 to 19 March 2010 at the premises of SIAP, Chiba, Japan. The selected participants from Bangladesh, China, Ghana, Lao, Mongolia, the Philippines and Vanuatu for the Module Course were required to attend this course. The course curriculum was designed for official statisticians of those invited seven countries to introduce STATA software for statistical data manipulation and data analysis.

The main objectives of this distance-learning training course were: a) to increase the basic capability of trainees in the use of STATA software; b) to provide trainees with the basic skills for carrying out descriptive analysis using STATA and c) to prepare trainees for further statistical training courses, namely Tokyo-based, regional and country courses. The course covered topics such as getting started with STATA and basic commands to inspect datasets.

Each day the course ran for two hours at the premises of Tokyo International Centre (TIC) with two sessions. Each session lasted in 50 minutes and between two sessions participants had a break of 15 minutes. In total, there have been eight sessions.

In total, 43 participants participated in this training course including those 10 participants who were selected to attend the Module Course. Countries nominated more female participants for this course except Bangladesh from which there was only one female participant among 10 Bangladeshi participants.

SIAP faculty member Ms. Gereltuya delivered the lectures and provided hand-on exercises during the lecture times to strengthen participants’ knowledge gained during the course conduction.

The participants’ course evaluation shows that all the participants indicated that the course level and its content were very useful or useful and relevant to their work at office. A few participants expressed that the course duration was very short.

It has been found that there is a substantial need to improve the ability of official statisticians in the use of statistical software of developing countries to gain advantage of utilizing it in data analysis and in producing high quality statistics to monitor development goals, including MDGs.

Still there is a need to conduct such distance-learning training course to teach the basics of STATA commands to prepare official statisticians of Asia and the Pacific countries for further training courses in official statistics such as TMA, regional, sub-regional and country courses. In particular, this training is important for those who will attend training courses on poverty measurements and income distribution.