

40th Anniversary Celebration of SIAP

**Ninth Management Seminar for the
Heads of National Statistical Offices in Asia and the Pacific
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“Developing Professional Capability for National Statistical Systems”

COUNTRY PAPER - Republic of Korea

PART A

To ensure good coverage of many approaches available for both developing and maintaining professional capability, when describing their country experiences, NSOs are requested to address the following questions about strategies used for developing and maintaining professional capability and their effectiveness.

Recruitment

Q1. Do the recruited staff possess the professional skills generally needed by NSO? Or is significant additional training required? Which skill area is the greatest ongoing problem?

A1. Our staff possesses the professional skills as we hire new employees on a two-tiered system: regular and special recruitment to fulfill our needs. For regular hiring, we require general knowledge concerning statistical skills. For special hiring, we seek those who have highly specialized capabilities in areas concerned, for ex., statistics, economics, sociology, international cooperation, etc. Both new and existing employees receive additional training throughout their career, which is designed to help them achieve their greatest potential.

Regularly hired staff who possess the basic statistical skills, meanwhile, are required to be trained before they are assigned to do statistical production and analysis related work. For this, newly hired staff need to have on the job training and education concerning specific statistical methodology.

Q.2 Do you use or have used any special strategies for recruitment to ensure new staff have required skills? (e.g. cadetships, graduate recruitment programs, take graduates from associated statistical training institutes). Please list the strategies and indicate which ones are successful and which ones have not been successful and why.

A2. In order to obtain and utilize high-level human resources, we recruit those who have a PhD (doctorate degree) as part of our special recruitment process. These highly-educated employees contribute greatly to the organization and its work utilizing their expertise.

Q3. Have you worked closely with universities to ensure graduate programs meet the skills needs of NSO? Please briefly describe any arrangement.

A3. We invite university professors to give lectures for training courses of our staff, mainly in the topics of sampling, modeling, advanced data analysis techniques, etc.

Development

Q4. Does your NSO have staff development plan that is linked to goals and objectives of its long-term strategic plan or National Strategy for Development of Statistics?

A4. Statistics Korea has a staff development plan which is fully developed and implemented in terms of a training program which serves to strengthen statistical capacity. (See Part B.) In addition to this, Statistics Korea recognizes that many other statistical agencies have difficulties in accomplishing their duties to produce and disseminate accurate statistics. Therefore the implementation of a personnel exchange system between KOSTAT and other statistical agencies is under consideration which would contribute to future development.

Q5. How does your NSO integrate the need of professional development of individual employees into the long-term plan?

A5. See Part B.

Q6. How does your organization identify the need for professional capability building of each individual employee?

A6. The Statistical Training Institute, an affiliate of Statistics Korea, conducts regular user surveys on training needs of our staff. Everyone is encouraged to express their candid views on the types of training they want to receive, and division directors are consulted on this matter as well.

Q7. What are the main means used for development of professional skills of staff?(e.g. formal courses, on-the-job training, self help courses, certificates or post graduate courses offered by universities, training programs conducted by international organisations, study tours) Which means are considered to be the most effective and why? Which means are considered to be the least effective and why?

A7. Statistics Korea uses a multiple of means for developing professional skills of staff through formal courses, OJT and self help courses. One of the most effective means of developing professional skills at KOSTAT is formal courses provided by the Statistical Training Institute. The STI designs and implements numerous courses on statistics and other topics, which are highly beneficial to employees and contribute to the development of their professional skills. In addition, we have a program which focuses on supporting employees who want to pursue further educational degrees, both at home and overseas. OJT program has also achieved positive results by utilizing the know-how of senior staff and is highly useful skill for newly hired staff to develop their professional statistical capability.

However, while it is helpful for acquiring theological knowledge, a challenge remains as post graduate courses offered by universities have a limitation in providing increasingly useful skills with new staff who are actually involved in the work of producing and disseminating statistics.

Q8. How does your organization select employees to participate in training or other capacity building activities, especially funded by international organizations?

A8. We select employees for international training courses based on an overall assessment of one's credentials, including one's expertise, on-the-job experience, language ability, and potential for growth.

Q9. What performance measures does your organization use to assess the effectiveness of capacity building efforts? Please describe the key indicators that you found useful in measuring the success of capacity building initiatives supported by your NSO or by others.

(If your organization has an agreed/draft list of capacity building indicators, please share it as annex to your country paper

A9. (1) The performance evaluation list of staff members by their division heads includes an item, "How many hours of training has the employee spent during the evaluation period and what kind of training did they receive?" Currently, employees are required to receive at least 100 hours of training per year. This requirement has been instrumental to making employees dedicate a substantial number of their working hours to training and establishing the "Training is key to the success of individuals and the organization" culture at KOSTAT.

(2) Some of the indicators used are "the employee's training record", "number of specially adapted courses developed", "number of statistics courses taken during the period", and the measured results for the degree of satisfaction for all the training courses.

Organizational strategies

Q10. Are there special career paths for professional staff? Please describe arrangements.

A10. The conventional personnel policy of KOSTAT is rotating staff members on a regular basis to broaden their knowledge base and enrich on-the-job experience. However, we have begun to adopt career development paths for staff specializing in survey methodology, economic statistics and social statistics, and will consider expanding such tracks in due course.

Q11. How does your NSO determine the professional skills its employees need in order to meet current, emerging and future statistical information requirements?

A11. Statistics Korea has acknowledged that new methodology which can improve and guarantee the accuracy and effectiveness of statistics is required to be developed in accordance with the current future statistical information requirements. More significantly, it is essential that staff in Statistics Korea cultivate the capability to recognize and meet newly emerging

needs that users of statistics require through a close network with primary users and other statistical agencies.

Q12. Are competencies for various positions spelt out and do incentives exist for staff to obtain new competencies? Please describe the arrangements, if yes.

A12. Yes. For professionals working in the area of statistical methodology, competencies are spelt out for each level, in terms of the required education level, training courses, and years of experience.

For staff working in specific areas, opportunities for training abroad, including short or long term courses are provided. For those who acquire the necessary competency and desire to transfer to other positions, they will be given chances with appropriate positions when available.

Q13. Is staff membership of professional associations encouraged? Is there active NSO participation?

A13. KOSTAT has encouraged the staff to actively participate in various professional associations to strengthen and improve their individual capacity. It has been involved with various statistics research related expert groups such as the Korean Statistical Society, the Korean Demography Society and the Korean Association for Survey Research.

Q14. Have decisions on organisational and job structure been made to address capability? E.g. centralization of functions such as methodology or subject expertise. Please provide details, if yes.

A14. Yes. Statistics Korea has addressed capability by establishing the Statistical Research Institute which is mainly in charge of researching statistical methodology for high quality statistics and analyzing statistics in depth. In addition to this, KOSTAT restructured the headquarter office in January 2010 to strengthen the capacity of analyzing statistics and planning surveys and to efficiently manage the organization.

Q15. Does the range of work available in the organisation attract and retain qualified staff? – e.g. analysis as well as operational work

A15. We believe that the culture of solid professionalism, ample training opportunities, and a wholesome corporate culture helps retain qualified staff in the organization. Mostly, the work related to the sampling, projection, GRDP, population census has been highly welcomed.

Q16. Is there a formal regular program for particular categories of staff to broaden their knowledge and skills?

A16. Yes, the Statistical Training Institute offers six long-term specialized courses on survey planning, sample design (I and II), population estimation, economic time series analysis, and handling non-response data. Next year it will provide additional courses on national accounts, index theory, and small area statistics. These courses are 16 weeks long and 3 hours/week.

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Q17. Are professional skills obtained regularly by contracting in staff or contracting out work?

A.17 Yes, we obtain professional skills by both contracting in experienced staff and by contracting out work (mainly for statistical package courses and spreadsheet courses).

Other

Q18. Have developments in IT made the development and maintenance of the capability of national statistical service easier or more challenging? How?

A18. IT development has certainly contributed to the progress in our national statistical service, especially by establishing the infrastructure to provide official statistical information which is produced by many other statistical agencies at one go. KOSTAT has provided a statistical service for the public through the establishment of the National Statistics Portal Database by taking advantage of IT developments. Newly designed techniques such as statistical visualizations and storytelling are currently utilized to offer an increased amount of various statistics service.

A Challenge has arisen in response to the rapid IT developments is the requirement of external IT expert as much time is needed to train staff in certain applications.

Q19. Are the professional requirements of NSO acknowledged in your government? Or is there no special recognition and allocation of staff occurs without consideration of the professional capability of the NSO?

A19. There has been a nationally increasing recognition that Statistics Korea possesses professional function of producing reliable official statistics and coordinating statistical agencies. For meeting this expectation, KOSTAT hires employees following the successful passing of a public examination which tests statistically related subjects and professional capability is considered when newly hired staff are allocated to each division. Also, we encourage the use of special recruitment to hire professional staff for ensuring the professionalism of KOSTAT.

Capability of the national statistical service

Q20. What is the general level of professional capability of the national statistical service as a whole compared with that of the NSO? Lower, the same, or higher?

A20. We consider the professional capability of our national statistical service is at a higher level. Even though Korea has a decentralized statistical system, the official statistics produced by a variety of organizations have been synthetically provided through the Korean Statistical Information Service Portal (www.kosis.kr), which is managed by KOSTAT. This service has encouraged more people to use statistics according to their purpose and in turn, enhanced the recognition that KOSTAT provides a comprehensive statistical service.

Q21. Does the NSO or some other government body have strategies for developing the professional capability of the national statistical service? (e.g. career paths managed service wide, outpostings, secondment of staff, inpostings, fellowships, joint or collaborative projects, service-wide training or development events such as seminars) If so, what are the most successful strategies used and which strategies have been unsuccessful and why?

A21. KOSTAT has implemented the mid and long term Information Strategy Plan for improving the professional capabilities of the national statistical service. Numerous external IT experts have been brought in to boost the national statistical information service and professional capabilities have further been enhanced through cooperation with nongovernmental institutes possessing IT related expertise.

Q22. Which professional capabilities are the most challenging to develop or maintain? Please explain why.

A22. The most challenging aspect of developing and maintaining the national statistical service is that KOSTAT inevitably needs external IT expert so as to respond to the rapid developments in IT as a certain amount of time is required for staff to acquire the knowledge and apply it, thus enhancing the existing statistical service.

PART B

Please provide details of one or two strategies that have been used with the aim of improving or maintaining professional capability. In doing so please place an emphasis on what worked or did not work and why.

< Title : KOSTAT's Statistical Expert Training Plan >

1) Background and directions of the plan

- It is necessary that KOSTAT's statistical experts enhance their professionalism to strongly support the KOSTAT's development strategy, "Leading Advancement of National Statistics, and Producing Reliable Statistics."

- For this, KOSTAT personnel system has been partially coordinated by adding the KOSTAT self managed personnel system to the existing administrative system so as to train the statistical expert.

- It is expected to encourage employees to pursue self-development to become statistical expert and this would have beneficial efforts for strengthening the organization as a whole.

2) Staff applied to the KOSTAT Statistical Expert Training Plan

: Deputy Director(5th grade) and Senior Assistant Director(6th grade)

Cf. According to Korean Government Administrative System, it is considered that Director(with 4th grade) is in charge of managing deputy director(5th grade), senior assistant director(6th grade) and assistant director(7th grade~10th grade).

Divisions and job posts of Statistical Expert on Professional Fields

Professional Fields		Division	Specific Job post & grade
Survey Planning (Questionnaire Design)		Sponsored Survey Division	- Survey Planning : Deputy Director (2), Senior Assistant Director (1)
Sampling		Sampling Division	- Sampling Designing and Household Sampling : Deputy Director (2)- Sampling Designing and Sampling Household, Establishment and Agriculture & Fisher Statistics : Senior Assistant Director(4)
Classification		Statistical Standards Team	- Economic and Social Classification : Deputy Director (2) - Economic Classification : Senior Assistant Director (2) - Social and Health Classification : Senior Assistant Director (4)
Data Processing	Imputation	Sampling Division	- Including Sampling job
	Masking	Information Technology Service Team	- Micro Data service : Deputy Director (1), Senior Assistant Director (2)
Speculation and Modeling	Population Projections	Vital Statistics Division	- Population Projections: Deputy Director (1), Senior Assistant Director (2)
	Seasonal Adjustment	Economic Statistics Planning Division	- Composite Index (CI): Deputy Director (1), Senior Assistant Director (2)

* () means the number of job posts.

3) Management of Statistical Expert

- Recruitment : Open Competition of the applicant who qualify the job description

* ex) Job description: at least three-year job experience, completing related training and education courses, relevant academic degree(Masters or higher)

- Working period : An evaluation is given after the first third year of employment and renew for next three years (six years in total)

* Evaluation committee is supposed to be organized to screen and evaluate the performance of the staff who has been designated as a statistical expert.

4) Incentives for Statistical Expert

- Opportunity to attend job (professional field) related national and international training courses and mission to other countries

- Individual preference is considered and can be moved to professional field related division after accomplishing its duty as a statistical expert