

UNITED NATIONS STATISTICAL INSITTUTE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Second Workshop on “Forging Partnerships in Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific”

23 – 24 November 2004,
Bangkok, Thailand

WORKSHOP REPORT

Introduction

The second workshop on Forging Partnerships in Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific was held in November 2004 in Bangkok, Thailand. The workshop was attended by representatives of 11 invited countries (Australia; Brunei Darussalam; Fiji; India; Indonesia; Islamic Republic of Iran; Macao, China; Maldives; Philippines; Republic of Korea; and Samoa); 6 observers (Afghanistan; France; Hong Kong, China; Kiribati; and New Zealand) , and 8 representing international organizations: FAO; ILO; EC; OECD; SPC; Centre for Economic, Environmental and Social Statistics. The list of participants is attached as Annex 1

The overall objective of the workshop was to identify feasible interactive mechanisms for collaboration and to prepare and agree on quality guidelines for assessing statistical training in order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of statistical training as an essential component of human resource development in national statistics.

In line with this objective, the workshop set out to achieve the following outcomes:

- to develop the structure of a network of professional collaboration in statistical training which will contribute towards achieving national and global development goals and
- to agree on quality guidelines for assessing statistical training courses and materials, in preparation for the accreditation and certification of these.

The workshop was opened by Mr. Andrew J. Flatt, Chief, and UNESCAP Statistics Division. He indicated that many of the participants had to travel great distances to participate in the workshop and this showed the importance that they attach to closer coordination of statistical training. Mr. Flatt informed the participants about the major developments in SIAP since the first workshop on “Forging Partnerships in Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific”. He briefly described some ongoing and future activities, which have a strong training component, undertaken by the Statistical Division. Mr. Flatt urged participants to take the necessary steps (1) to formalize and activate the network of statistical training, which will maximize synergies from closed collaboration among organizations involved in statistical training, and, (2) to agree on guidelines for assessing the roles that statistical training institutes and training activities play in national development in Asia and the Pacific.

The Director of SIAP then described training activities that SIAP is going to undertake for the next two or more years including the Tokyo Metropolitan Area training courses and the Outreach Training Programme courses. In order to meet increasing needs in statistical training in the region and to strengthen country statistical training capacity, SIAP has extended its outreach program. He showed the extent to which countries have cooperated in helping SIAP in carrying out its Outreach Programme, which offers very rich potential in terms of regional cooperation. When SIAP located training activities in the countries of the region under these partnership arrangements, cost efficiency and geographical representation of the participation have been shown to increase.

Agenda and method of work

The workshop was sub-divided into three modules:

- Module I: What training resources and programs are available? What are possible areas for collaboration
- Module II: How can we partner and draw up synergies?
- Module III: How do we account for results?

The agenda of the workshop is attached as Annex 2.

Module I: *What training resources and programmes are available? What are possible areas for collaboration?*

The aim of this module was to identify training resources and programs that are available in the region and possible areas for collaboration among the agencies involved in statistical training activities.

Participants in their country reports briefly described the current status of statistical training in their respected countries and informed the workshop on what training resources: programs, facilities and other possible areas that they can collaborate and share with the countries in the region.

Six out of 11 countries have statistical training institutes (STI) or training units that serve the national statistical agency (NSA) or other government agencies involved in producing statistics. The countries with no training institutes or training units mainly rely on international agencies for assistance in conducting training programs. The courses or subjects taught in the Institutes are wide-ranging, beginning from introductory theoretical statistics, to official statistics and information technology subjects. Participants of the training mostly are staff of NSAs or other government agencies involved in producing statistics. The teaching staff of these institutes are mostly officials of the institute or NSAs who have good knowledge and experience in official statistics. All of them evaluate their courses at the end of their delivery through questionnaires accomplished by trainees.

Some countries in the region have relatively well developed statistical training units/institutes for government statisticians and are available to share or are sharing these with the countries in the region. However many of them lack the training facilities, and have shortage of qualified and experienced professional teaching staff and training materials necessary to meet the country needs in statistics.

Participants informed the workshop about possible areas in which to collaborate and expressed willingness to share available training resources: training materials, training facilities and others with the countries in the region. They expressed the need and rationale of establishing a network for statistical training in the region and expected to benefit from it by making it as a medium for exchanging experiences and learning from their colleagues through collaborative activities.

Reports of other organizations

PARIS 21. The representative from the secretariat of the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21) introduced its main purposes, mission and key activities. The main goal of PARIS21 is to develop a culture of evidence-based policy making and implementation, which serves to improve governance and government effectiveness in reducing poverty and achieving MDGs. He briefed the workshop on National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS), which was initiated by PARIS21 and which provides an assessment of the current status of the National Statistical System (NSS) and sets out the objective, among others, for improving national statistics over 5-10 years. He said that PARIS 21 could help countries to develop their strategies for national statistical development and also highlighted major activities that planned to do for Asia and Pacific for the coming three years.

The representative informed participants about creation of a task team on statistical training, the purpose of which is to assist countries in developing statistical training strategy and advocacy matters. The first meeting of the task team was held on November 22, 2004, prior to the workshop.

He emphasized that training strategy is an essential component of any human resources policy and training sector and, in addition, is a very suitable mean to enhance cooperation and partnership among statistical agencies. SIAP agreed to be as the convener for this task team. Most of objectives and outcomes expected from this task team coincided with the present workshop.

SPC. The representative of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) shared their experience and views concerning statistical training for countries in the Pacific. He mentioned major challenges related with training statistical staff in the countries of the sub-region, such as wrong training for right people or sending right people but for wrong training; sometimes the training is too advanced; duration of training and weather condition of venue should be considered carefully; and language problems. To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of statistical training in the Pacific, he suggested that: 1) there should be a clear strategy about what national information systems themselves should do; what the NSOs should do; and what international organizations should do at the regional level; 2) choose the right people for the right training; profit from learned skills and increase multiplier effect of

training; 3) recognize appropriateness of capacity supplementation in some areas in preference to capacity building of human resources.

EC Mr. Maarten Boon, who represented the European Commission (EC), stated that it has a long tradition in funding development work in developing countries. The geographical area coverage of EC cooperation includes countries of Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP). He described the current status of official statistics in the region and the need for its improvement as a key instrument for the monitoring of the regional integration process and the positioning of the region into the world economy. The EC provides support in statistical capacity building in the region which is reflected in its Regional Strategy Paper and Regional Indicative Program for the period 2003 -2007.

FAO. The representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of UN (FAO) pointed out that FAO works with NSO mainly with respect to agriculture censuses and national accounts. He said that they organize training workshops in different types of analysis, and subjects which relate to agriculture and agriculture statistics and stressed the importance of involving people in line ministries in statistical training and other statistical activities, because they also contribute to the overall goal of better information in a national statistical system.

INSEE The representative of The National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies of France (INSEE) briefly outlined its training activities. The INSEE has a Statistical Training Center within its structure. Its purposes are to train middle level statisticians of INSEE and to organize training courses on selected topics for statisticians from transitional and developing countries. The INSEE provides support to the regional institutions in Africa. They train students for two or three years from 20 – 25 countries in collaboration with AfriStat and have provided technical assistance in this region for 40 years.

InWEnt – The representative of the Munich Centre for Economic, Environmental and Social Statistics (InWEnt) briefly introduced his organization as an organization for international human resources development, advanced training and dialogue. The agency has been existing for 32 years and focused on long term training courses with a duration of 3 to 4 months. The long term courses ended in 2005 and the number of these courses reached 62. Due to the cooperation with EU, they had a special regional focus such as the African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries. Currently they are offering different programs with a focus at shorter activities. He described the main activities for the next year such as a seminar on measuring democracy, governance and human rights, and a seminar on measuring HIV/AIDS, the duration of these seminars is three weeks. . The organization is involved in e-learning and has already organized such courses. In addition, they organize workshops and are planning to organize one on MDG next year. Participants of these courses would be experts, managers and decision makers from businesses and industry, politics, public administration and civil society from all over the world.

ILO. The representative of of the International Labour Organization (ILO) stated that it does not have significant regular training program in statistics. However, they organize occasional training courses at the ILO training center in Turin. The training activities of ILO are heavily

dependent on donor funding and statistical training programs focus mainly on specific areas of labour statistics. The ILO provides technical assistance in training its statisticians working at country level and NSA staff in implementing specific ILO funded surveys. The ILO also develops manuals in specific areas related to labour force statistics.

There are different modalities, different networking, and different concerns of international organizations on the challenges faced in their training tasks in terms of coordinating and making use of resources. International agencies also expressed the usefulness of and needs in establishing the statistical training network.

Module II: *How can we partner and draw up synergies?*

Module II focused on how the agencies can partner and draw up synergies and improve efficiency and effectiveness of statistical training in the region through establishing a statistical training network among agencies involved in statistical training.

The idea of establishing a statistical training network first received consideration at the First Workshop on “Forging Partnership in Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific” held in Bangkok, 2002.

Mr. Gonzalo M. Jurado, Consultant of SIAP, presented the concept paper “A Network for Partnership of National Statistical Agencies and National Statistical Training Institutes of Countries in the Asia-Pacific Region”. The paper was developed, as he said, using the information provided by participants about the country training activities and their views on establishing statistical training network in the region.

Mr. Jurado presented the summary of the present status of statistical training in countries in Asia-Pacific. He outlined strategies to facilitate collaboration and modalities for an effective networking among the agencies involved in statistical training in the region. Mr. Jurado explained the objectives, structure, building blocks for a statistical training network, and the basic features of participating agencies and institutes. He also described the elements of the network, proposed financing options for the network and provided views on how to make it operational.

The objectives of the network, as stated in the paper, are:

- to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of national statistical systems;
- to facilitate coordination and communication between national statistical agencies;
- to strengthen the individual training capabilities of the STIs;
- to align national statistical training programs to international priorities; without prejudicing their right to carry out programs that are specific to their country needs; and
- to disseminate best practices and exchange expertise amongst training institutes.

The paper proposed several issues such as the network membership; its governance, establishment of a steering committee and its duties and membership, and the role of international agencies in the network.

In order to achieve the objectives of the workshop, the participants were divided into four separate groups to discuss the issues described in the paper. The reports of the working groups were presented and discussed in plenary session. Participants agreed on the following recommendations:

Recommendations for Action Programme

After careful review of the document presented by Mr. Jurado, the participants of the workshop made some amendments and changes in the structure and elements of the proposed network as described in the working paper.

I. Structure of the Proposed Network

1. Goals of the Network

- Since it may not be possible to align all training activities to international concerns, training institutes must have the option of implementing outreach and other programs to respond to the specific needs of countries.
- Emphasis should be placed on practical courses to meet the needs of countries with small staffs and limited equipment.

2. Participating Agencies

- Membership in the Network should include regional bodies.
- Where statistical training institutes (STI) do not have adequate academic staff, they may fill the gap by hiring on a contract basis experts from outside, including experts from other member countries and international agencies.

3. The Steering Committee

- There should be a steering committee.
- Membership in the Committee should not include everybody; otherwise, the Committee will become too large and unwieldy. Rather, membership should be by regions or groups of countries, or by rotation within region or groups.
- Membership should include statistically developed countries (along with the other members cited in the document).
- Membership should include countries with established training institutes.
- Membership should include chiefs of NSAs (that do not have training institutes) and/or heads of training centres.
- In determining membership, there should be scope for invitees for specific issues.
- Membership should reflect disciplinary balance among members; avoiding overemphasis on any single specialization (e.g., balance of demographers with social statisticians, with national accounts specialists, etc.).
- SIAP should serve as the Secretariat of the Committee.
- SIAP Governing Board could serve as the steering committee

II. Basic Features of Participating Training Institutes

1. The Library

- The library can be very expensive. However, all members, large and small, can establish a library. They can begin with a modest collection, perhaps consisting of some titles in the SIAP library, which can be transmitted to them through the electronic system. This can be expanded later in an incremental way by adding collections from other member countries.
- Make the library catalogue available electronically.

2. Publications

- Include newsletter (call it e-letter).
- Include publications of such international agencies as PARIS21.
- Not every one can produce reference materials. The concept of publications should be broadened to include “learning resources” which will consist of handbooks, course notes, tests, exercises, and related materials.

3. Training Programmes

- Make training an integral component of human resource development.
- Add sampling methodology as a core area
- Introduce e-learning.
- Include relevant training programmes initiated by such allied international organizations as PARIS21.
- Make training “affordable” to all who need it.

4. Other Services

- Make the internet a main vehicle for bringing together supply and demand of training services in the region.
- Provide translation services (to translate training materials from local language to/from English).
- Make the internet the main medium for publicizing supply availabilities (of training materials, etc.) to all interested parties within or outside the Network.
- Provide assistance to NSAs and STIs in the selection of training courses and other activities (for example, if they need help with selection of software suitable to specific statistical tasks, then expert assistance might be provided).

5. The Internet

- As described in the document, the website is ambitious. For a start, members can publicize through their website whatever information they already have and should regard the list as a vision to work towards.

6. Regular Inter-actions

- There should be regular inter-actions among members. Though not all members will have the capacity to initiate, all will benefit from participation.

7. Exchange of Faculty

- The arrangement need not be an “exchange” but rather it can be temporary attachment.

8. High Level Visits

- The Network can help ensure that high level visits not only achieve their technical purpose but serve as means for raising resources as well.

9. Expected Overall Results

- Goals must be made ambitious so that progress can be measured and the Network can be judged as to whether it is delivering real value.

III. FINANCING THE NETWORK

1. Seek a modest membership fee
2. Seek contributions from leading donor agencies (for seed money).
3. Seek sponsors for specific activities and/or charge moderate and affordable course fees aiming for self-reliance

IV. OTHER

1. Articulate role of SIAP in the network

Module III: *How do we account for results?*

The module focused on how to assess the results of training activities in order to ensure that training programmes meet the needs of trainees and NSAs. Mr. G. Jurado presented the paper: “Guidelines for the assessment of the role of statistical training institutes and their training activities in national development of countries in the Asia-Pacific region”.

The paper suggests guidelines for the evaluation of the capacities of statistical training institutes serving NSAs and other government departments and divisions involved in statistical activities to contribute to the realization of objectives of national statistical system - national development goals in particular. The paper lays out the national statistical system, of which the NSA is the central component, and its objectives in relation to national development goals. It describes statistical training institutes and proposes a general framework for their evaluation in terms of the goals of the national statistical system; provides the description of training activities; and proposes, in addition to the general framework, a framework that is specifically applicable to training activities. Then it suggests guidelines along the lines of the modified framework that can be used in the assessment of training activities and makes remarks on the need for continuously updating the guidelines to ensure their responsiveness to the circumstances of the individual Asia-Pacific countries.

In the group working session, the same four groups were formed to discuss the issues presented in the paper. The workshop made several comments on improving the draft of the statistical training quality assessment framework and the accompanying guidelines for the assessment. These included:

1. The guidelines should be integrated with planning strategies particularly human resources planning strategies.
2. It is useful to add a part about assessment of needs for statistical training of NSS in the concerned areas as well as individual needs of prospective trainees. “Right training for right people”.

3. The practicality of implementation should be considered, particularly in measuring outcomes and impacts.
4. Evaluation and assessment should be done by independent and external people.
5. It is important to involve stakeholders in the evaluation process.
6. Involve users and respondents in evaluation process.
7. Evaluation of training institutes should be separate from the evaluation of training activities.

Concluding workshop

The Workshop concluded with remarks made by Mr. Tomas P. Africa. In concluding, he showed satisfaction on the outputs of the workshop. He stated that the workshop achieved its objectives, and what the statistical training institutes need to do has become clearer. An inventory of what should be considered when SIAP conducts training activities in a country in whatever role it carried these out has been generally identified. The workshop, as he said, even went further by identifying some activities and some outputs for future actions. The e-library of shared resources, which would go under continuing evaluation, would be a singular achievement, and that in leading up to the creation of that library, the network will undertake the possible activities that workshop has listed. He thanked everyone and stated that he looked forward to implementing the workshop outputs.

Annex 1.

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Annex 2.

WORKSHOP AGENDA

23 November (Tuesday)

- 09:00-09:30 **Opening Session**
- Welcome Speech Andrew Flatt
Chief, UNESCAP Statistics Division
 - Introduction of Participants and Observers
 - Workshop Overview
- 09:30-14:30* **What training resources and programmes are available? What are possible areas for collaboration? (Moderator:**
- Presentations (10 minutes) by:
 - SIAP
 - Countries
 - Organizations
- * including coffee/tea and lunch breaks/group photo
- 14:30-17:00* **How can we partner and draw up synergies? (Moderator:**
- Presentation: Gonzalo Jurado
SIAP Consultant
A Network for Partnership of National Statistical Agencies and National Statistical Training Institutes in the Asia-Pacific region
 - Work Group Discussions
Defining interactive mechanisms among the institutions involved in the statistical training in the ESCAP region and approaches for implementation towards a network for among institutions involved in statistical training in the ESCAP region
 - Plenary
Group Reports and Recommendations for Establishment of Network
- * including coffee/tea break
- 17:30-19:00 Reception