

UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC
STATISTICAL INSTITUTE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Tenth Management Seminar for the Heads of National Statistical Offices in Asia and the Pacific
7 – 8 December 2011, Chiba, Japan

SEMINAR REPORT

I. General information

Item	Description
Seminar venue:	Hotel Springs, Chiba, Japan
Seminar Director:	Hiroshige Furuta
Number of participants:	<p>Total: 38 participants from 25 countries and 5 international organizations</p> <p>By gender: Female - 5, Male – 33</p> <p>In total, 38 participants attended the seminar, which consisted of 33 participants including 14 heads or above of NSOs from 25 countries; Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Fiji, Georgia; Hong Kong, China; India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nauru, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste, Vanuatu and Viet Nam; and 5 participants from 5 International organizations; ADB, ISI, PARIS21, SESRIC and SPC.</p> <p>Besides, two observers for Thailand and ISI attended the seminar..</p> <p>In addition, 4 staff came from ESCAP-SD as secretariat.</p> <p>(Annex 1)</p>
Host agency:	Government of Japan
Organizers	SIAP and Statistics Division of ESCAP (ESCAP-SD)

II. Seminar contents

Item	Description
Seminar background and objectives:	Two major forces are changing the environment in which National Statistical Institutions operate. On one hand, the ease and speed with which information is available are creating new expectations on the part of clients; on the other, the amount of data generated from

	<p>personal devices, sensors, instruments and computers is increasing rapidly, representing new important sources of information that can be used to generate statistical information.</p> <p>Changing client expectations combined with increased availability of information call for national statistical systems to offer a new range of more integrated statistical products to clients. In turn, this calls for a re-think of business processes along which data are collected, processed and disseminated by national statistical systems.</p> <p>Against this backdrop, the 10th Management Seminar of SIAP was organized:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (iii) to bring together the heads of NSOs in the ESCAP region to review global and regional initiatives and share experiences in responding to the needs for modernization of statistical information systems; (ii) to enhance skills and knowledge of participants regarding the relevant concepts and tools; and (iii) to determine common challenges and discuss and agree on regional approaches required to address the challenges. <p>The concept note for the Seminar is attached as Annex 3.</p>
<p>Summary proceedings and discussions</p>	<p><i>OPENING SESSION</i></p> <p>The Seminar was opened by Haishan Fu, Chief, Statistics Division, ESCAP, and participants were welcomed by Takao Ito, Director General for Policy Planning, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication, Japan. In his keynote speech “Managing the digital data deluge – A critical challenge for the National Statistical Offices this decade”, Brain Pink, Australian Statistician and Chairperson of the ESCAP Committee of Statistics, provided an overview of the challenges and opportunities faced by national statistical systems in the ‘information age’. The full speech is available on the SIAP website (http://www.unsiap.or.jp/training/ms10_index.php).</p> <p><i>SESSION ONE: Modernization of statistical information systems: Review of Global and regional initiatives</i></p>

On the basis of presentations by Brian Pink, ABS, and Rikke Munk Hansen, ESCAP, on ongoing initiatives at the global and regional levels, participants supported addressing common challenges through a regional approach. It was voiced that statistics is a long-term investment and to remain relevant, national statistical systems need to undergo a process of transformation. It was suggested that the Seminar should allow for further in-depth discussions and provide recommendations for regional cooperation and a plan for its initiation. ICT was mentioned as a specific challenge in view of the need for modernizing data collection and dissemination as a part of NSS transformation processes.

SESSION TWO: Modeling Statistical Business Processes: New concepts and recent experiences

Following a presentation by Trevor Sutton, ABS, on the Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM) and its application in transformation processes at ABS, participants raised issues regarding the conditions for its applicability. It was clarified that the model is flexible enough to be applied in different ways and it is a starting process that leads to a project management process. The participant of New Zealand shared their experience with applying the model, and the representative of Samoa, speaking on behalf of the Pacific sub-region, reported that the concept was being discussed and explored for application in the Pacific. It would be huge challenge for the Pacific nations, who have to start from the scratch, and technical assistance from Australia and New Zealand would be greatly appreciated.

SESSION THREE: Meeting New Expectations of Users: Integrated statistical products

On the basis of presentations by Olav Ljones, ISI, and Shunsuke Kimura, MIC, Japan, participants sought clarifications on the new statistics Act of Japan. Clarifications were particularly sought on the reporting mechanisms of the commission and resolving disagreements. Mr. Kawasaki, the former Director General of Statistics Bureau, Japan, supplementing the clarifications given by Kimura, stated that the disagreements between the statistical agencies and the advisory board

	<p>are resolved through open discussions at monthly meetings. Clarification was sought on standards mentioned by Olav and importance of developing NSS including universities and stakeholders was stressed.</p> <p><i>SESSION FOUR: Meeting evolving needs of data users: Microdata dissemination</i></p> <p>Following a presentation by Carmelita N. Ericta, the Philippines, on principles of microdata dissemination and its country experience, and country experience by Kuenga Tshering, Bhutan, the participants agreed that dissemination is not isolated but a part of whole business process, and proposed to discuss the issue of considering country size because countries have to do the same thing whether big or small. It was introduced that capacity building of staff was conducted through joint research with academia. It was also clarified that ACIC (Asian Common Industrial Classification) is consistent with ISIC.</p> <p><i>SESSION FIVE: Group discussions as described in the next “Summary group discussions”</i></p> <p><i>SESSION SIX: Conclusions and closing</i></p> <p>The concluding session was moderated by Carmelita N. Ericta, the Philippines, who summarized the discussions and outcomes of the Seminar. Before the Seminar was officially closed by Davaasuren Chultemjamts, Director of SIAP, Hiroshige Furuta, SIAP, reported on the outcome of the previous nine Management Seminars and participants completed evaluation questionnaires for the 10th Management Seminar. The summary evaluation report is attached as Annex 3.</p> <p>All presentation materials are available on the SIAP website (http://www.unsiap.or.jp/training/ms10_index.php).</p>
<p>Summary group discussions</p>	<p>Participants discussed aspects of processes for transforming national statistical systems in three separate groups. The following summarizes</p>

the outcome of the discussions:

1: Initiating a national transformation process: advocating the issue

Group composition: Bangladesh, Cambodia; Hong Kong, China; Indonesia, Japan, Nauru, New Zealand, Philippines, Sri Lanka, ISI, ESCAP

- The group recognized a need to advocate first to the leaders of national statistical systems to ensure that this key group of champions are fully aware of the urgency of the issue and buy in to what would be lengthy and resource-intensive processes. An envisioning exercise at national, regional and global levels on the future core business of NSSs, could be an approach to this;
- At the global level, the envisioning exercise should include IT, communication and media leaders and trendsetters to enhance the understanding of how societies will evolve and what will be the future roles of NSSs;
- Transformation within statistical institutions would include all NSS staff, who would need to take ownership of the process. It was noted that exercises to change attitudes would likely be necessary;
- Leaders of national statistical institutes should advocate through direct and personal communications to higher levels of government to obtain adequate resources to continue producing quality official statistics
- The group also recognized a need to advocate the issues with data users through improved information on methodology and better dialogue between data users and data producers. The group noted the importance of improving the statistical literacy of users, including through programmes in schools.

2: Enhanced regional cooperation: establishing a regional cooperation mechanism

Group composition: Australia, Bhutan, Fiji, Georgia, Pakistan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Samoa, Vanuatu, ESCAP, SESRIC

- The High-Level Group for Strategic Developments in

	<p>Business Architecture in Statistics (HLG-BAS) is overseeing and coordinating the work of about 30 technical groups or initiatives in relation to the transformation process (notably MSIS, METIS, SAB...). Most of the work of these groups in developing concepts, tools and standards, is based on a European/Western context.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The discussion highlighted the need for the Asia-Pacific region to be represented in the HLG-BAS in order for concepts and framework developed by the technical groups to take into account the regional context. Reflecting on mechanisms for ensuring this, the group recommended: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ The mechanism should be placed under the authority of ESCAP through its Committee on Statistics in order to formalize the presence of the region at HLG-BAS; ⇒ Prior to the next session of the Committee on Statistics in late 2012, an interim mechanism should be established, enabling one or more Committee members to participate on behalf of the Asia-Pacific region immediately. The functioning of the interim mechanism could be reviewed by the Committee in December 2012 with a view to deciding on longer term arrangements; ⇒ A proposal on the interim mechanism could be reviewed by the Bureau of the Committee on Statistics at its next meeting in February 2012. ▪ Regarding the participation of the region in the technical groups under the supervision of the HLG-BAS, it was noted that contrary to the HLB-BAS, any country could participate in and contribute to the work of the groups. Furthermore, the work of the groups is made available through a number of publicly accessible web platforms so countries in the region can engage and benefit directly from their work; ▪ The group discussions also highlighted the need for a regional knowledge exchange platform to facilitate capacity building related to the transformation process. Such web platform could list demands and availability of expertise in specific areas that relate to the modernization of statistical information systems
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to facilitate the exchange of expertise and experience within the region.

3: Supporting the transformation process: capacity needs and capacity building

Group composition: Australia, India, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Republic of Korea, Timor-Leste, Viet Nam, ADB, SPC

- The group noted the importance of GSBPM to analyze individual processes as part of re-engineering statistical business processes. However, the group noted that specific skill sets were needed in order for NSOs to apply GSBPM;
- The group also noted that GSBPM exercises within or across statistical institutions should be multidisciplinary, involving staff with expertise in statistical methods as well as IT specialists. The group cautioned that the modernization of business process should NOT be viewed as an upgrading of IT infrastructure and skills, noting that such an approach would not result in identifying [statistical] process deficiencies;
- The group also noted that the mapping of business processes through the GSBPM might face resistance from sector departments within statistical organizations and recommended in that regard that special attention should be paid to building capacity of staff to adapt to new business processes. Re-training and redeploying of staff may be needed to implement new, efficient business processes;
- The discussions also highlighted the need for a regional capacity building effort, in particular for small statistical systems (such as Pacific island countries).

III. Evaluation/ Observations

Item	Description
Seminar evaluation:	The participants' evaluation indicated that all participants found the seminar relevant to their work, and they were satisfied with seminar level and contents. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The level of the seminar relevance; Very useful 57%, Useful 43%

Attachments:

1. List of participants (Annex 1)
2. Daily course schedule (Annex 2)
3. Seminar concept note (Annex3)